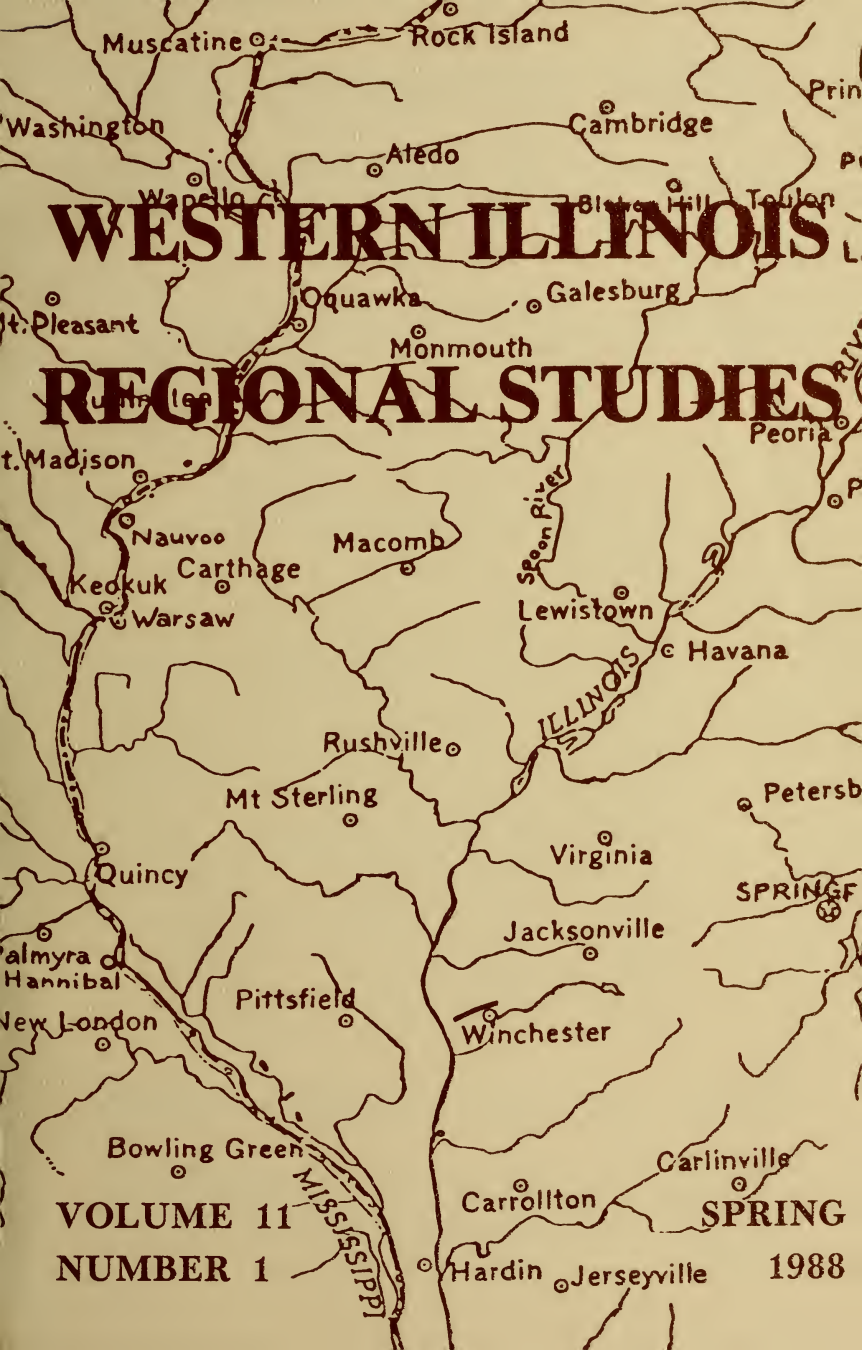
WESTERN ILLINOIS REGIONAL STUDIES



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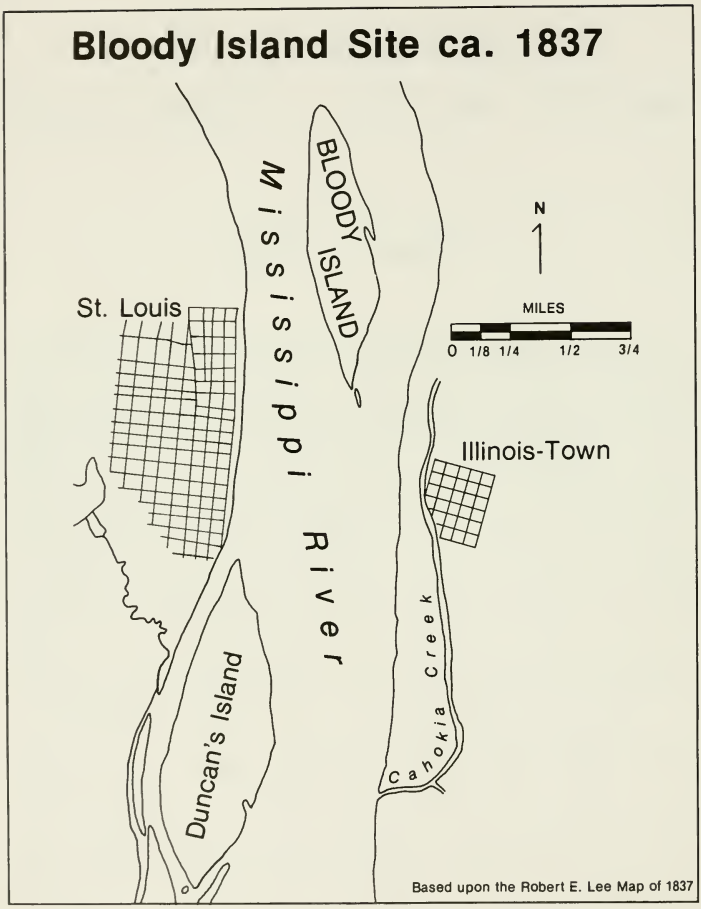
THE LIFE AND DEATH OF BLOODY ISLAND: A FERRY TALE

William L. Burton

Like the Anglo-Saxon hedgerow or the medieval field in England, the ferry site in American throws light on the spatial pattern of human activities. Location is all for the ferry. It exists only as an adjunct to land travel. Under England common law, and by court and statutory definition in the United States, a ferry is an extension of a highway. So important was the ferryman in our early history that he was exempted from militia duty. So important were ferries to communication and commerce that states and local governments once wooed and subsidized them as they later did railroads. So lucrative was the ferry franchise, and so subject to abuse, that ferries and their operators were frequently the target of legislative, judicial and populist assault.[1] Ferry operations by their very nature encourage monopoly, and while communities eagerly sought ferries, they just as eagerly sought to regulate them. One of the laws passed by the new government of the Northwest Territory was one of 1799 to control ferries. It empowered courts to fix rates and regulate services.[2] In a contemporary America where four, six and even eight lanes of vehicular traffic rush across bays and rivers on giant structures of steel and concrete, it takes an effort of the imagination to recall a day when politicians and their constituents got as incensed over ferries as they did later over railroads and grain elevators. Gibbons *v.* Ogden (1824) is one of the most familiar cases in American constitutional law, known to every school child as the English would say. It was a climax to the early and turbulent history of the steamboat; it laid the foundation for the basic principle of national supremacy in the regulation of interstate commerce.[3] Few today remember that ferryboat operations were a significant feature of the events leading up to that landmark supreme court decision.

Historians and geographers alike tend to ignore ferries, despite their critical role in national economic, social and legal development. Where the ferry wins a sentence or paragraph in a text, it is likely a nostalgic mention in a chronicle of the "Stage Coach and Tavern Days" genre. Except for those economists who are transportation specialists, scholars today relegate ferries to antiquarians; they regard them as quaint relics found athwart remote sections of blue highways on state road maps.[4]



The first half of the nineteenth century was the golden age of ferries in American transportation history. One of the most significant ferry operations in the nation, and one that reveals in microcosm the essential but controversial role of the ferry, was that between St. Louis and Illinois, crossing the barrier of the Mississippi River. The site was unique. It included a major hazard to ferry navigation, Bloody Island. The history of the island is inextricably entwined with that of the ferry business, and with the city and harbor of St. Louis.

The birth and early history of Bloody Island are best described as murky. The Mississippi River is an enormous, meandering silt-laden stream. In its

multi-million year history it has built and destroyed uncounted thousands of alluvial islands. The violent floods that destroy banks and islands also build them. Just north of St. Louis the Missouri River empties into the Mississippi, and below that junction the Chain-of-Rocks confuses the flow of water. Together, these features gave to the Father of Waters in the St. Louis area a turbulent, erratic course, a channel notoriously fickle, and a tendency to construct shifting sand bars that on occasion developed into islands. Bloody Island, one of these alluvial creations, grew up between St. Louis and what is today East St. Louis, directly astride the ferry route. And therein lies our tale.

When St. Louis was founded in 1764 there was no Bloody Island. The fur-trading post soon attracted trade from up and down river, and from across the Mississippi in what after 1783 was the Northwest Territory of the new American nation. A ferry began operations out of St. Louis the year the colonies declared their independence.[5] Not until 1795, however, when a Captain James Piggott established his ferry, did regular and continuous service develop. There is some evidence that Bloody Island's appearance coincided with that of Piggott's ferry.

Early maps of St. Louis area show many islands in the river, but their locations and configuration are vague; there is a kind of generic quality about them, as if the cartographer simply sprinkled islands about the river to let the reader know that some existed.[6] The famous St. Lys map of 1796, however, records two large reefs in the river, near the northern and southern limits of the town.[7] The locations of these two reefs or sand bars, and their relationship to known landmarks along the St. Louis shore, suggest that they are the beginnings of what became Bloody Island and its downstream companion, Duncan's Island.[8] Tradition, that venerable and oft-quoted historical authority, simply says that Bloody Island appeared in the river "about 1800."[9]

Sometime after 1800, a critical threshold in island formation occurred. What had been two sand bars were colonized by cottonwood and willows, and this vegetation grew rapidly. The sandbar to the south and close to the Missouri shore attracted a farmer named Duncan and took his name. The one to the north was the site of occasional Indian encampments and its location forced ferry traffic to detour to the south. As the current of the river struck the north end of this island, the channel started to divide. Part turned against the Illinois shore, striking it with great force and washing away trees and many acres of rich bottom land. Within a few years, a navigable channel developed close by the Illinois shore. The current veering west of the island, now smaller than it was before, carried sand and silt against the Missouri shore, filling in the St. Louis harbor and contributing to the northward growth of Duncan's Island. These geographic changes coincided with the arrival of steamboat traffic on the river — the steamboat *Pike* was the first to land at St. Louis, in August 1817 — and the substantial increase in immigrant and commercial travel requiring ferry service across the river.[10]

On 18 April 1818, by act of Congress, Illinois became a state. Carved out of the Northwest Territory, Illinois had its boundaries defined by statute, and the western border of the state was described simply as "down the middle" of the Mississippi River to its confluence with the Ohio. Illinois and the future state of Missouri were to have concurrent jurisdiction of the river.[11] By the fall of 1818, James Thompson, a surveyor involved in the official survey of the new state, measured Bloody Island and included it as a part of T. 2 North, Range 10 West of the 3rd Prime Meridian and inside St. Clair County, Illinois. The irregularly shaped mass of 130.33 acres bore the prosaic label of "Island No. 3."[12] Two years later, when Missouri became a state, Duncan's Island was assumed to be within that state's borders. The official or traditional channel flowed between Bloody Island and the Missouri shore, although more and more boats chose the passage between Bloody Island and the Illinois shore. Uncertainty about the exact location of the Illinois-Missouri border encouraged a kind of activity that gave "Island No. 3" a new name.

Dueling was illegal on both sides of the Mississippi, but the *code duello* was popular nonetheless. The vague status of the new island blurred the question of law enforcement and the first duel there occurred in 1810.[13] Even as Illinois statehood quickened interest in the border area, two U.S. army captains fought a duel on the island.[14] Thomas Hart Benton fought two duels there (in the second he killed his opponent), and in August 1831 Major Thomas Biddle and Congressman Spencer Pettis, standing only five feet apart, killed each other in a tragic and senseless adherence to the *code duello.* More than any other encounter, the Biddle-Pettis duel fastened the name of "Bloody Island" on the alluvial acreage.[15] Cock fights and boxing, also illegal, attracted crowds to unsavory entertainments and contributed to the island's reputation.

Until the 1820s, except for the distaste the more fastidious felt about Bloody Island shenanigans, and the inconvenience ferry operators and customers experienced in skirting Bloody Island and Duncan's Island, there was no perceived need on the part of public officials or private businessmen to take issue with Mother Nature's sculpting of the river front and the islands. By 1825, however, there was growing concern about both harbor and channel. Steamboats, increasing in tonnage and draft, all too frequently ran aground as they tried to dock at St. Louis, while the river channel, split by Bloody Island, looked more and more as if it were moving permanently to the Illinois side, a move that could destroy the future of St. Louis.[16] The island, now densely forested with cottonwood, willow and sycamore trees, gave pasture to cattle, shelter to hunters and fishermen as well as duels and other illegal activity, and continued to increse in size as high water deposited sand and debris below the south edge. Municipal authorities in St. Louis built a diversionary dike, known as "Bischoff's Dyke," from the Illinois shore into the river north of Bloody Island in the hope that the deflected current might scour out of the harbor, but the project failed. In 1833 St. Louis officials hired John Goodfellow and his

oxen to plow the islands; the theory was that the loosened soil and sand and torn vegetation would wash away in the next high water. The contrary river continued to add to the islands instead.

As the problem exceeded the financial resources of the city, Mayor John F. Darby in 1835 led a move to obtain federal funding. With Andrew Jackson in the White House, the times were not auspicious for a nationally-funded internal improvements project. Thomas Hart Benton, a democratic senator from Missouri and a doughty opponent of such projects, found himself torn between principle and the desires of his constituents. He compromised both by simply ignoring the whole business. Led by the St. Louis congressman William H. Ashley, the rest of the Missouri congressional delegation pushed through an initial appropriation bill in 1836 and the U.S. Army chief engineer, General Charles Gratiot, began a study of the problem.[17]

Meanwhile, developments in the ferry business entangled everything in a two-state, highly partisan political knot. Captain James Piggott, who started the regular ferry service at this site, died in 1799. During the following decade a complicated series of leases and sales left the ferry business between St. Louis and Illinoistown (as the settlement on the Illinois shore was then known) in the hands of Samuel Wiggins.[18] Wiggins, an aggressive, ambitious entrepreneur from Cincinnati migrated to Illinois in the early nineteenth century and quickly mastered the arcane art of combining business and politics. In 1819 the Illinois legislature, with the passage of a private bill, gave him a franchise to operate a ferry "upon the waters of the Mississippi" between Illinois and St. Louis.[19] By 1821 he had a monopoly of the ferry service, won an enlarged charter from Illinois to build a turnpike road to his ferry and move his ferry landings at his discretion to such lands as "may belong to him," and wielded increasing economic and political power in the area.[20]

When the developing state of Illinois in 1830 encountered a grave financial crisis, the legislature authorized Governor John Reynolds to borrow $100,000 at the generous rate of six percent. Reynolds, unwisely as it turned out, borrowed the entire amount from Samuel Wiggins, and this "Wiggins Loan" and subsequent developments related to it became a highly-charged issue in Illinois politics.[21] Wiggins and his business associates later got control of the state bank which took over the loan, and used funding from that bank to finance enterprises that increased both the ferry business and the value of his land holdings in Illinois. By then (1836) the Wiggins company was a symbol of unrestrained and corrupting power in Illinois, and at the same time a symbol of necessary strength and growth in St. Louis.[22]

Samuel Wiggins, who began replacing his horse-powered ferries with steamboats in the 1820s, found Bloody and Duncan's islands a thorny problem. He steadily added to his property holdings along the Illinois shore so that he could move his ferry landings to compensate for increments to the islands in the path of his ferry service. In 1832, busy with

his other interests and growing older, he sold his ferry interests to a consortium of businessmen that included his brother, William; the transaction included over 1,000 acres of land in Illinois, miles of shoreline, and all of Bloody Island.[23]

Keenly aware of the popular sentiment against the Wiggins company (to the public, the ferry remained the Wiggins Ferry), St. Louis Mayor Darby, in the very year he led the drive to get federal support to resolve the Bloody Island and harbor problem, entered into discussions with a group of Illinois businessmen on the possibility of starting a rival ferry company.[24] Darby and the Illinoisians — all of whom were prominent leaders in that State's Democratic party — eventually decided not to challenge the Wiggins monopoly.

General Gratiot, who was a native of Missouri and interested in the economic development of the river, assigned young Lieutenant Robert E. Lee to the St. Louis harbor survey. Lee, accompanied by another young officer, who was fresh out of West Point and a superb draftsman, Montgomery C. Meigs, came to St. Louis in 1837 and went to work.[25] While the men conducted their laborious and thorough survey, still another duel occurred on Bloody Island.[26] General Gratiot, who had already made a preliminary investigation, stated that whatever plan was adopted, the essential thing was to preserve Bloody Island.[27]

Lee's weeks of work on the site confirmed the conventional wisdom of preceding years. Duncan's Island, about 200 acres in size, was growing northward and threatening St. Louis harbor; at low water sand bars connected it to the Missouri shore. The channel between Bloody Island and the Illinois shore was steadily increasing and rapidly cutting away the Illinois shore. His report recommended a complex of dikes between Bloody Island and the Illinois shore, along with protection for the head and west side of the island. Coupled with another dike from Bloody Island toward Duncan's Island, these works might wash away Duncan's Island, restore the channel of the Mississippi to its former path, and save St. Louis harbor.[28] Lee used the winter months to prepare equipment for the coming spring, and armed with substantial additional federal appropriations, carried out a mammoth program of dike and revetment construction. Over the next year his crew built hundreds of feet of dikes around Bloody Island, and the plan enjoyed partial success. Much of the head of Duncan's Island was swept away by the re-directed waters, and hopes rose in St. Louis. Before his projected works were finished, however, the appropriations ran out; Lee left St. Louis and the flooding river soon destroyed most of the dikes. The old problems returned with a vengeance.

Prodded by the complaints of ferry customers unhappy with the Wiggins Company fares and operations, and angered by what was seen as an arrogant monopoly, the Illinois legislature in 1839 passed a law empowering the County Commissioners Court of St. Clair County to establish a competing ferry. The law called for the exercise of the power of eminent domain to condemn property owned by the Wiggins Company and build a

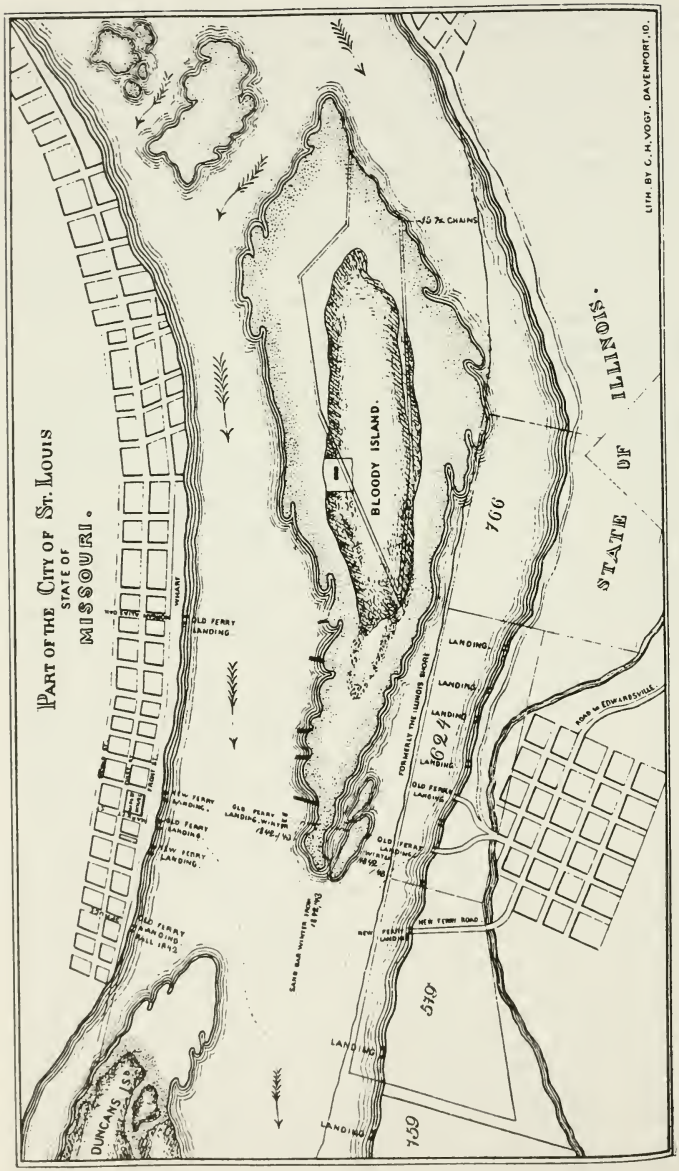
road three hundred feet wide to a landing on the Illinois shore just south of Bloody Island.[29] The County Commissioners promptly acquired a right-of-way through Wiggins land and arranged for a James Harrison to establish a rival ferry service. The Wiggins officials instituted legal proceedings to stop the St. Clair County Ferry, but the ferry continued to operate while the case dragged through the courts.

Still another threat to the Wiggins business emerged from a surprise quarter. Asserting that Bloody Island was uninhabited a J. M. Bayfield tried to take possession by staking a claim in the federal land office.[30] Bayfield sought the help of Daniel Webster in pressing his claim. Public land office officials, however, denied the claim. Bloody Island, they said, was not only inhabited — two houses and a cornfield could plainly be seen from the Missouri shore — but documents proved that the land belonged to Wiggins.[31]

Bad weather and the power of the flooding Mississippi River posed a grave danger, both to the Wiggins company and its St. Clair County rival. The winter of 1842-43 was a memorable one. Bloody Island expanded dramatically downstream, forcing the ferry companies to relocate their Illinois shore landing sites several times. For a time there was even a landing on the island itself.[32] Moreover, the upstart St. Clair County Ferry stimulated by its very presence a growing variety of small-scale business enterprises. Along the public road carved out of the Wiggins property, and leading to the St. Clair landing, there grew up a blacksmith shop, a boarding house, two grocery stores and a stable — enterpreneurs exploiting the presence and needs of ferry passengers — a classic example of small-scale business enterprise for the time.[33]

Alarmed by the continued and growing threat the river and islands posed to St. Louis harbor, St. Louis businessmen and the St. Louis *Missouri Republican* prepared an elaborate analysis of the situation, hoping to attract a combination of private and public funds to a rescue operation.[34] The report summarized the long history of harbor problems, the abortive Robert E. Lee works, and concluded that St. Louis — now a thriving city of 30,000 people — owed its future to a solution of its river front problems. Studies and reports, however, offered no relief. By 1844 the only channel in the Mississippi open for navigation was that between Bloody Island and the Illinois shore. An appeal to the Missouri state government in 1845 elicited a law empowering St. Louis to levy a special tax for harbor improvements. Together with the Wiggins Ferry Company, and combining the financial resources of the city and the company, St. Louis in 1847 drew up a plan for a new dike, one that would connect Bloody Island to the Illinois shore.[35] When word of the scheme reached Illinois, loud protests ensued. The stage was set for a climactic and dramatic confrontation involving St. Louis, the Wiggins Ferry Company, St. Clair County and the government of Illinois. Bloody Island was center stage.

The city of St. Louis-Wiggins Ferry Company plan was similar to the one



From Charles Gilman, *Illinois Reports*, VII (Chicago: E. B. Myers, 1869), p.224.

developed by Robert E. Lee. Two dikes were to connect Bloody Island with the Illinois shore, one from the head of the island, the other from its foot. These dikes or dams were to be high enough and wide enough to allow road and railroad traffic directly from the mainland to the island.[36] By closing the channel between the island and the Illinois shore, and redirecting the current westward, it would scour the St. Louis harbor and wash away Duncan's Island. Stones cut from a quarry below St. Louis were barged to the site, and as the work got underway, reaction in Illinois spread from the waterfront to the state captial.

Petitions from citizen groups, letters from irate individuals, city council resolutions and indignant newspaper editorials descended upon Governor Augustus C. French.[37] Four basic objections emerged from all the rhetoric. First, there rose again and again the cry that St. Louis, by its unilateral initiative, violated the sovereignty of Illinois and injured the pride and dignity of the state. The construction, after all, was almost entirely on Illinois territory, even though on property owned by the Wiggins company. Second, the dumping of the rock in the Bloody Island channel, given the record of the river in destroying the plans and structures of mere men, might simply block that channel, hinder navigation, and leave the old channel still in poor condition. Third, and reflecting a long-felt notion on the part of some Illinois residents, there was a somewhat vague idea that once again St. Louis was simply exploiting Illinois. Finally, in what was clearly a conspiracy theory, some argued that St. Louis was simply doing the dirty work for the Wiggins company and taking action to destroy the St. Clair County ferry.[38] A fifth argument, very real but not published, was the expectation in Alton and Quincy that halting the project would strike a blow at St. Louis as their economic competitor and give them a better chance to replace St. Louis as the commercial and transportation center of the region.

Governor French opened negotiations with Mayor John M. Krum of St. Louis, asked several trusted persons to keep watch at the construction site and apprise him of developments, and both Illinois and Missouri authorities leaked parts of their official correspondence to favored newspapers in a play for public opinion.[39] French was convinced he had to defend the sovereignty and dignity of Illinois, and an important consideration for him was the defense of the St. Clair County ferry against the assault of the Wiggins company, which he believed intended to destroy it.[40] Efforts to get Krum to agree to take the matter to a federal court failed, and so Illinois officials got an injunction from Circuit Judge Gustave Koerner to halt construction.[41]

For the rest of the summer and fall of 1848, the people of Illinois and Missouri enjoyed a bizarre and exciting spectacle. Governor French dispatched the Illinois secretary of state, General H. S. Cooley, to Illinoistown, where he observed activity and made agitated reports to Springfield about violations of the injunction by St. Louis contractors. Angered by the stream of information reaching his office about injunction

violations, French authorized Sheriff David W. Hopkins of St. Clair County to call out the county militia and make use of artillery stored at Belleville and Alton to stop the Bloody Island work.[42] While he did not use the militia, Hopkins did deputize a large posse, mounted a cannon, and arrested a few workers caught dumping stone in the Bloody Island channel. It was Gilbert and Sullivan farce. Judge Koerner ordered the release of the arrested men because the sheriff could not get them to give their proper names. Fussing and fuming, Cooley urged the governor to take military action.[43] Governor French, who never doubted that the project would ultimately benefit Illinois and that St. Louis had the legal right to undertake the construction, followed a restrained course.[44] Fortunately, the only volleys fired were those in the newspapers, and workmen escaping arrest offered no resistance; they simply evaded the long arm of the sheriff and his band of deputies.

Not everyone in Illinois opposed the St. Louis scheme. Ex-Governor John "The Old Ranger" Reynolds and other Belleville residents urged French to go along with it.[45] Even the governor's agents on the scene admitted that Illinois opinion was divided.[46] Political opponents of both French and Krum gleefully whipped up popular sentiment on both sides of the river in efforts to embarass the two officials, who privately were quite good friends while they publicly excoriated each other.[47]

St. Louis sent a delegation to Springfield and Illinois dispatched a team of distinguished citizens to St. Louis. The St. Louis team, which met with Governor French, included an official of the Wiggins Ferry Company. The Illinois team, headed by Judge Koerner — in whose court the two sides fought each other — got a courteous reception but accomplished nothing.[48] When Judge Koerner subsequently dismissed the injunction halting construction work, the state of Illinois appealed, and as winter set in the two sides continued a ballet of clandestine work and protests while the case made its way through the court system.

Throughout the affair the Wiggins Ferry Company played a key role. Adam L. Mills, its top executive officer, took a prominent part in the bi-state negotiations, actively pursued the company's interests in the courts, and unabashedly argued that what was good for the ferry company was good for Missouri and Illinois.[49] While the city of St. Louis and the state of Illinois grappled with each other legally and the city's contractors sparred with Sheriff Hopkins and his posse, Mills claimed that any property owner had the right to protect his own property from flood damage, and by the time the law halted other work crews, those of the ferry company busied themselves at reveting the Illinois shoreline owned by the company. The ferry company made no secret of its operations, and even provided Sheriff Hopkins the use of its telegraph facilities so that he could communicate promptly with Governor French![50] In St. Louis, the company pushed hard to keep operations moving.

The city of St. Louis had one primary objective — saving its harbor. This could be achieved with a low dike to the Illinois shore, just high enough to

divert the river channel. But the ferry company was already involved in the construction of a macadamized turnpike across its property in Illinois to the shore, and the company wanted a dike large enough and high enough for a macadamized road right to Bloody Island, which could then become the regular ferry landing. Mills claimed that this would allow the company to make substantial reductions in its fares. Critics charged that the high dikes was a plot by Wiggins to shut out the competing St. Clair County Ferry and restore the Wiggins monopoly.[51] Previous Wiggins efforts in the courts to destroy its competition failed, and a roadway to Bloody Island, asserted its opponents, would do what the law refused to do.

Although Koerner's circuit court decision lifting the injunction against St. Louis was promptly appealed to the Illinois supreme court, both sides in late 1848 inclined toward compromise. With the partially constructed dike to Bloody Island blocking the Illinois channel, the Illinois legislature in early 1849 passed a joint resolution that satisfied all parties.[52] The resolution gave Illinois approval for the project, provided that the city of St. Louis file a bond with the state to complete a dike topped by a "safe and commodious" highway to Bloody Island, that the road be toll-free, and that the rights of the Wiggins company be fully protected. The city was to make sure that the St. Clair County Ferry got either a landing on the island, or pay for a new landing on the Illinois shore, so that it might compete with Wiggins. The completed project (there was a built-in deadline of two years) was to include two dikes between Bloody Island and the Illinois mainland.[53] The Wiggins company got everything it wanted.

By February 1851 a committee of the legislature officially reported the completion of the Bloody Island works. Once again, the Mississippi River took a hand. It unleashed flood waters which destroyed the undertaking. Again work crews assembled, again the dikes went up, and this time they held. By 1856 Bloody Island was firmly attached to the Illinois mainland and its fate as an island sealed. In subsequent years the river deposited silt and sand in the old waterway, Wiggins and other companies used land fill to create new commercial and residential blocks in East St. Louis, and by 1867 what was once an island in the Mississippi was part of the Illinois shore line.[54] The dikes completed the destruction of Duncan's Island, and saved the St. Louis harbor.

The death of Bloody Island is not the end of the ferry tale. Wiggins Ferry Company incorporated in Illinois in 1853 and went into a variety of new business enterprises, most related to the Bloody Island property.[55] Armed with new authority from the state, the company laid out residential lots and a system of streets and alleys, built elaborate wharf facilities and warehouses, and within a few years turned Bloody Island into a vast labyrinth of railroad transfer works. Even after the opening of Eads Bridge in 1874 the ferry company continued to do a large business. For years Wiggins had a pool arrangement with the bridge company under which it shared the profits of the bridge. After the pool was outlawed in the early 1880s, the ferry, making use of its advantage in location and facilities,

continued to compete with the bridge. Always there was competition for Wiggins from other ferry companies. Although Wiggins regularly grabbed the bulk of ferry custom, a succession of ferries to the north and south of the Bloody Island location took about twenty-five percent of the business.[56]

As Bloody Island evolved into a section of Illinois mainland, attached by river deposition, land fill and a network of dikes, roads and railroads, it became the Third Ward of East St. Louis after the city's incorporation. The Wiggins Ferry Company merged with the St. Louis Railroad Terminal Association in 1905, and the long association of ferry company and island ended. The deep and narrow Mississippi River now flowing between St. Louis and East St. Louis, bereft of the islands that once menaced commerce, is regarded by the Army Corps of Engineers as a triumph of river management.[57]

Out of the joint history of Bloody Island and the ferry companies came a series of court cases whose results are one of the most enduring monuments of the site and the activities associated with it. When the state of Illinois in 1839 passed legislation allowing St. Clair County to charter a ferry in competition with Wiggins, that enterprise immediately appealed to the courts to protect its privileged position.[58] That 1840 case marked the beginning of many years of appeals and legal maneuvers, as the Wiggins company tried unsuccessfully to establish and keep a monopoly. The geography of the Bloody Island site is an important aspect of that struggle. Among other arguments, the state and federal courts consistently rejected the Wiggins claim that the island's existence and its impact on river currents entitled the company to have an ambulatory ferry landing on the Illinois shore. By definition, the courts agreed, a ferry landing was stationary.

The climax of the legal history occurred in the landmark 1850 case of Mills v. County of St. Clair.[59] In this United States Supreme Court decision several fundamental principles of ferry law were spelled out. Wiggins had claimed that its ferry franchise was an exclusive right to a ferry monopoly, but the court ruled that a state legislature reserves to itself the right to establish rival ferries. Another part of the ruling, and one with significance far beyond ferry operations, was the court's conclusion that, where a grant of authority (in this case the ferry franchise) contained ambiguous wording, the meaning was always to be construed in favor of the government and against the francise holder.[60] This same case settled the very basic doctrine that the establishment of ferries across navigable streams was a subject within government control, and not a matter of private right. When St. Clair County exercised its power of eminent domain to condemn Wiggins land for a rival ferry, the court ruled, it was a legitimate exercise of state authority.

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Alton, Illinois, with the assistance of Cincinnati merchants, challenged the leadership of St. Louis as the regional economic capital.[61] This came when the problem of Bloody

Island and the fickle Mississippi channel added to St. Louis's stress. While many residents of Illinois regarded the Wiggins ferry as a monopoly to be fought and controlled, the St. Louis business establishment and city government saw the Wiggins enterprise as an invaluable weapon in the city's defense. The city staunchly supported the ferry's goals in the confrontation of 1848 so far as the Bloody Island project was concerned. St. Louis fought her attackers vigorously. As one mid-century observer put it,

> I am well aware that there are other places, who look with envious eyes upon St. Louis—whose efforts will be combined to cripple, or at least deplete her—and we are not to suppose that such efforts are to produce no results. Such combinations of capital, and energy and influence, as are brought to bear against St. Louis, and with the avowed objective of diverting her trade, I have never know before in reference to any place.[62]

Alton (with the enthusiastic help of Quincy) used the guise of state sovereignty and dignity to resist the 1848 effort of St. Louis to extricate itself from its changing physical environment. St. Louis won both battles and by the 1860s Alton, no longer a threat to the Missouri city, settled into a niche as a local market town. The historical geography of Bloody Island illuminates the contemporary debate of Central Place Theory versus dynamic regional systems characterized by discontinuity and influenced by outside factors.

Jacksonian America and modern America are both stamped by their ambiguous attitudes toward monopoly, regulation and economic development.[63] On the one hand, the franchise and corporate charter represent special privilege and perhaps monopoly. On the other hand, successful enterprise is admired and admitted as essential to economic growth. Regulation, with the instrument of the franchise or license, may protect the public interest, but it is also a way to restrict market entry and competition. The history of Wiggins and Bloody Island shed light on this ambiguity in the American character.

The events of 1848 suggest that state government was regularly open and subject to populist pressures. They also remind us that the technique of the media "leak" is an old one in American politics. In the never-ending scholarly debate over perceptions and realities of monopoly in nineteenth century America, the record of the Wiggins Ferry Company shows that state and federal courts were keenly aware of the problem of monopoly and, at least in the case of ferries, limited it. Finally, the adventures surrounding the life and death of Bloody Island justify the old dictum of geographers that rivers make poor boundaries.

NOTES

The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of Professor Arlin Fentem of WIU, who provided invaluable assistance with the cartography and map interpretation.

[1]*U.S. Supreme Court Digest: Lawyers' Edition* (Rochester, N. Y.: Lawyers' Co-Operative Publishing Co., 1981), 8: 191-93; *Century Edition of the American Digest* (St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Co., 1901), 23: 862-948; *American and English Encyclopedia of Law,* 2nd ed. (Northport, N. Y.: Edward Thompson Co., 1899), 12: 1086-1115. The legal record is a tricky maze, full of contradictions, dead ends and detours. At least some modern lawyers assume that ferry law is a minor branch of admiralty law, but admiralty law has little if any bearing on it. When the Illinois Department of Transportation in the late fall of 1984 closed the bridge across the Illinois River on US 67 at Beardstown, to make major repairs, a ferry franchise provided temporary service. Until the bridge reopened in 1985, the Beardstown ferry awakened all the historic arguments and antagonisms about fares, hours of operation, relative efficiency, and the like. It was, of course, a legal monopoly. Residents and workers on both sides of the river were also reminded of how critical the bridge and ferry are to daily living.

[2]Seymour Dunbar, *A History of Travel in America,* 4 vols. (1915; rept., New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 2: 639-40.

[3]Robert Eugene Cushman, *Leading Constitutional Decisions,* 11th ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1958), pp. 316-24; Alfred H. Kelly and Winifred Harbison, *The American Constitution: Its Origins and Development,* 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963), pp. 293-96.

[4]"If the great American novel is ever written," mused transportation historian Archer B. Hulbert early in the present century, "I hazard the guess that its plot will be woven around the theme of American transportation, for that has been the vital factor in the national development of the United States." See A. B. Hulbert, *The Paths of Inland Commerce,* Chronicles of America Series, vol. 21 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920), p. vii. We are still waiting for that novel.

[5]Corine Hachtman, "The History of the Wiggins Ferry Company," (MA thesis, Washington University, 1931), p. 5.

[6]The Bellin Map of 1755, the Chouteau Map of 1764, an anonymous map of 1770, and the Hutchins Map of 1771, all display islands in the stretch of river above and below the site of St. Louis, but few islands can be identified with those existing today.

[7]"Plan de la ville de St. Louis Des Illinois," par George de Bois St. Lys, reproduced in John W. Reps, *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 77. St. Lys identifies the southern sand bar as simply "Bature" (reef), and the larger northern one as "Bature qui d'ecouvre a balses eaux" (Reef exposed at low water).

[8]One cannot be certain. The most celebrated guide for travelers and settlers, Zadok Cramer's *The Navigator* (1814; rept., Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Microfilms, 1966), first published in 1801, pays close attention to the numerous and

dangerous islands of the Mississippi, and it shows no islands identifiable as either Bloody Island or Duncan's Island.

[9]Robert A. Tyson, *History of East St. Louis, Its Resources, Statistics, Railroads, Physical Features, Business and Advantages* (East St. Louis, Ill.: John Haps and Co., 1875), p. 20; "Bloody Island," *Missouri Historical Review*, 26 (1932): 389-91; William Fayel, "Bloody Island," in Howard L. Conard, ed., *Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri*, 4 vols. (St. Louis: Southern History Co., 1901), 1: 302-03.

[10]William Hyde and Howard Conard, eds., *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, 4 vols. (St. Louis: Southern History Co., 1899), 2: 981-88.

[11]3 U.S. St. at Large, 428. Oddly enough, there is no official map of the state of Illinois. Given river boundaries with Iowa, Missouri, Kentucky and Indiana, the state had borders that were vaguely defined and subject to the whims of floods and shifting river locations. See the letter to the author of 16 September 1985 from Philip S. Howe, counsel to the Illinois Secretary of State. Is the "middle of the river," for example, a point equidistant from the two shore lines (and those shores constantly changing) or is it the middle of the channel, which in 1818 was dividing along the banks of Bloody Island? After 1820, when Missouri became a state, the two states settled boundary disputes by negotiation and legislative action.

[12]The survey map is reproduced in Frank and John Hollman, *Current and Historical Atlas of St. Clair County* (Belleville, Ill.: Frank and John Hollman, 1936), p. 193. The well-known Melish map of 1818 does not provide sufficient detail to note either Bloody Island or Duncan's Island. Duncan's Island was presumed to be in the Louisiana Territory and thus not part of either Illinois or the 1818 survey.

[13]Carl R. Baldwin, "Bloody Island: St. Louis Dueling Ground," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 4 March 1975. Baldwin puts the main river channel **east** of the island.

[14]Louis Houch, *A History of Illinois*, 3 vols. (Chicago: R.R. Donnelly and Sons, 1908), 3: 79. A Captain Ramsay died in an August 1818 duel.

[15]Randall Parrish, *Historic Illinois* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1905), p. 335; John Reynolds, *The Pioneer History of Illinois*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Fergus Printing Co., 1887), p. 354; *Illinois: A Descriptive and Historical Guide* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1939), p. 314; *Missouri: A Guide to the "Show Me" State* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941), p. 300; Edwin C. McReynolds, *Missouri: A History of the Crossroads State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), p. 121; "Bloody Island," *Missouri Historical Review*, 36 (1932): 389-91.

[16]John Thomas Scharf, *History of St. Louis City and County*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts and Co., 1883), 2: 1053; Hyde and Conard, *St. Louis*, 2: 982; Tyson, *East St. Louis*, p. 20.

[17]John F. Darby, *Personal Recollections* (St. Louis: G. I. Jones and Co., 1880), pp. 220-28. In keeping with already well-established pork barrel tradition, the initial modest appropriation was primarily for study and not construction.

[18]*The City of St. Louis and Its Resources* (St. Louis: St. Louis Star-Savings, n. d.), pp. 1-50.

[19]Hachtman, "Wiggins Ferry History," pp. 14-15; *Laws of Illinois* (1819-21), pp. 104-05.

[20]Agnes Wallace, "The Wiggins Ferry Monopoly," *Missouri Historical Review*, 42 (October 1947): 1-19. Based on Wallace's MA thesis at St. Louis University, this

article contains much useful information, but lacks coherence and could easily lead to a conclusion opposite to that of the title, i.e., there never was a real Wiggins monopoly. The curious phrase "may belong to him" was the focus of a later court challenge to the ferry company.

[21]Hachtman, "Wiggins Ferry History," pp. 25-27; Robert P. Howard, *Illinois: A History of the Prairie State* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1972), p. 202.

[22]Tyson, *East St. Louis*, pp. 19-22.

[23]*City of St. Louis*, p. 50. Another motive for the land acquisition was to limit competition.

[24]James Semple to John F. Darby, 10 March 1835, Darby Family Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

[25]Douglas Southall Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 4 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 1: 133-58.

[26]*Missouri Historical Review*, 39 (1945): 129, a reproduction of an 11 November 1837 news item in the *Missouri Argus*.

[27]Hyde and Conard, *St. Louis*, 2: 983-84.

[28]"Report of the Secretary of War," U.S. Senate, 25th Congress, 2nd Session, 29 January 1838; Stella M. Drumm, "Robert E. Lee and the Improvement of the Mississippi River," *Missouri Historical Society Collections*, 6 (1928-31): 157-71. Accompanying the "Report of the Secretary of War" is a large-scale (200' to the inch) survey map of the entire bi-state site prepared by Lt. Meigs. See Senate Document 139, 25th Congress, 2 Session. Most subsequent cartography appears to be based on this fine map.

[29]Mills et al. *v.* The County of St. Clair, et al., 12 Law, Ed., U.S. 46-49, 1850.

[30]J. M. Bayfield to Daniel Webster, 14 August 1842, copy in the Western Historical Manuscript Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.

[31]Silas Reed to Thomas Black, 4 October 1842, copy in the Western Historical Manuscript Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia. An 1842 map (see below) shows what appears to be a farm on the west side of the island.

[32]Mills v. County of St. Clair (1845), in Charles Gilman, *Illinois Reports* (Chicago: E. B. Myers, 1869), p. 224. The Wiggins company used as evidence supporting its case against the St. Clair ferry (see below) a map prepared for the city of St. Louis harbor improvement plan. This map shows the changes in Bloody Island from the time of the 1818 survey to the ravages of the winter of 1842-43. These floods opened a stretch of water between the Lee dike at the west foot of Bloody Island and the island itself. The city of St. Louis closed that gap in 1845.

[33]Ibid.

[34]A. B. Chambers, "Statement to the President and Members of the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce," in *Proceedings of the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, in Relation to the Improvement of the Navigation of the Misssissippi River, and Its Principal Tributaries and the St. Louis Harbor* (St. Louis: Chambers and Knapp, 1842). Chambers admitted that the legality of construction by St. Louis on Illinois territory was quite questionable.

[35]Hachtman, "Wiggins Ferry History," pp. 32-33.

[36]Edward Keating, the mayor of Alton, researched the documents filed in various government offices in the area, and prepared a report of the history of the various St. Louis harbor-Bloody Island projects from 1836 to May 1848, and sent it to Illinois Governor Augustus C. French. This Ms history is in the Augustus C. French Papers, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield. Hereafter cited as French Papers, ISHL.

[37]Some of the correspondence is found in E. B. Greene and C. M. Thompson, eds., *Governors' Letter Books, 1840-1853* (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Historical Library 1911), vol. 7 of the "Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library"; Governor French later made a report to the Illinois General Assembly, and included copies of some of the correspondence, *Reports Made to the Fifteenth General Assembly of the State of Illinois* (Springfield: Charles H. Lanphier, 1849); Illinois and Missouri newspapers published some of the official reports and correspondence; a colorful, popular account of the episode is Carl Baldwin's "River Diversion War: St. Louis vs. Illinois," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 5 March 1975.

[38]See Robert Dunlap to French, 18 April 1848, and Keating to French, 3 May 1848, French Papers, ISHL; French to Nathaniel Niles, no date, but early November 1848, *Governor's Letter Books*, pp. 183-86; Resolution of the City Council of Alton, 3 May 1848, French Papers, ISHL; Alexander Davidson and Bernard Stuve, *Complete History of Illinois, From 1673 to 1873* (Springfield: Illinois Journal Co., 1874), pp. 558-61.

[39]French to P. B. Fouke, 15 May 1848, *Governors' Letter Books*, pp. 171-72; French to Krum, 18 May 1848, *Illinois Reports*, p. 63; *Missouri Republican*, 1 and 6 July 1648; *Illinois State Journal*, 2 and 9 August 1848.

[40]Keating to French, 29 June 1848, and H. S. Cooley to French, 25 July 1848, French Papers, ISHL; French to Nathaniel Niles, no date, *Governor's Letter Books*, pp. 183-86.

[41]*Missouri Republican*, 28 June 1848.

[42]French to Hopkins, 26 July 1848, *Governor's Letter Books*, pp. 177-78.

[43]Lyman Trumbull to French, 27 July 1848, Cooley to French, 25 July 1848, and Hopkins to French, 29 July 1848, French Papers, ISHL.

[44]French to ex-Governor John Reynolds, 20 June 1848, French Papers, ISHL. Both supporters and opponents of the harbor project planted anonymous articles in the newspapers.

[45]Reynolds to French, 17 June 1848, and a petition to French, 23 June 1848, French Papers, ISHL; *Belleville Times*, 4 August and 6 December 1848.

[46]Fouke to French, 14 June 1848, and William Martin to French, 6 May 1848, French Papers, ISHL.

[47]Krum to French (marked "private" so that it would not appear in the newspapers), 7 July 1848, French Papers, ISHL. Krum told French that Old Ranger Reynolds ought to have his ears pulled for getting involved in the controversy.

[46]Koerner, et al., to French, 1 August 1848, French Papers, ISHL; Koerner, et al., to Krum, *Missouri Republican*, 9 August 1848; Krum to the Koerner Committee, 1 August 1848, in the *Missouri Republican*, 9 August 1848. The ferry official was Adam Mills, who was also a member of the St. Louis City Council. See Krum to Reynolds, 20 July 1848, French Papers, ISHL. The St. Louis committee apparently consulted with Reynolds before it met with Governor French. Reynolds ran for the Illinois senate in 1848 and lost. His support for the St. Louis side may have cost him the election. See Trumbull to French, 12 August 1848, and Fouke to French, 13 August 1848, French Papers, ISHL.

[49]A. L. Mills, "St. Louis Harbor," *Missouri Republican,* 10 August 1848.

[50]Hopkins to French, 29 July 1848, and Fouke to French, 4 August 1848, French Papers, ISHL.

[51]Keating to French, 29 June 1848, Cooley to French, 25 and 27 July 1848, and Trumbull to French, 23 November 1848, French Papers, ISHL. Trumbull in 1848 was a young lawyer of a reforming bent, opposed to monopoly, and a candidate for the Illinois supreme court. He was one of the governor's best sources of information from the scene of the battle, and his letter of 23 November is a masterful summary and analysis of the situation. His anti-Wiggins bias, however, must be noted. In 1840 he was one of the team of lawyers defending the ferry competition from a Wiggins attack. See Mills *v.* Brown, 3 Ill. 548.

[52]"Joint Resolution Relative to the Construction of a Dike . . . ," *Laws of Illinois,* Sixteen General Assembly, 1849, pp. 238-39. Before the legislature took action, it received a lengthy and rather plaintive report from Governor French. I do not know enough about the situation at Bloody Island, wrote French, to make a recommendation, but I assume that there are among the members of the House those who are well qualified to do so. See French's *Report Made to the Fifteenth General Assembly,* 11 January 1848, pp. 61-64.

[53]*Illinois Journal,* 14 February 1848; Davidson and Stuve, *Illinois History,* p. 561.

[54]Claude N. Strauser and Gary W. Schwartz, "River Regulating Works — Middle Mississippi River," an unpublished paper presented to the 1977 convention of the American Society of Engineers in Dallas, 25 pp. The author expresses his appreciation to Mr. Strauser for a copy of this paper, and for the transparency maps accompanying it. During the Civil War Bloody Island was both a rendezvous for Union soldiers and a refuge for stragglers and scoundrels. A vigilante committee finally restored order to the island. See Conrad, *Missouri History, p. 303.*

[55]"An Act to Incorporate the Wiggins Ferry Company," *Illinois Private Laws* (1853), pp. 193-98.

[56]Hachtman, "Wiggins Ferry History," pp. 80-123.

[57]Strauser and Schwartz, "River Regulating Works," *passim.*

[58]Adam L. Mills, et al. *v.* The County Commissioners of the St. Clair County, *Illinois Reports,* 3: 53-55.

[59]12 Law, Ed. U. S., 46-49. Daniel Webster was one of the Wiggins attorneys. In its decision the Supreme Court admitted that the state abused its power of eminent domain, but argued that redress rested with the state legislature and state courts. See Harry N. Scheiber, "The Road to *Munn:* Eminent Domain and the Concept of Public Purpose in the State Courts," *Perspectives in American History,* 5 (1971): 380-81.

[60]This principle was repeated and strengthened in Wiggins Ferry *v.* East St. Louis (1882), 107 U. S. 365.

[61]Timothy R. Mahoney, "Urban History in a Regional Context: River Towns on the Upper Mississippi, 1840-1860," *Journal of American History,* 72 (September 1985): 318-39.

[62][John Hogan], *Thoughts About the City of St. Louis, Her Commerce and Manufactures, Railroads, Etc.* (St. Louis: Republican Steam Print Press, 1854), p. 7.

[63]Carl Russell Fish, *The Rise of the Common Man, 1830-1850,* A History of American Life, vol. 6 (New York: Macmillan, 1927), pp. 51-57; Harry L. Watson, "Old Hickory's Democracy," *Wilson Quarterly,* 9 (Autumn 1985): 101-33; James Q. Wilson, "The Politics of Regulation," in James Q. Wilson, ed., *The Politics of Regulation* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), pp. 357-94.

"NOW THE WILD PRAIRIE TO THE VIEW APPEARS": NINETEENTH-CENTURY ILLINOIS POETS OF THE PRAIRIES

Steve Olson

William Cullen Bryant's "The Prairies" imbues the western Illinois prairies with metaphorical significance. Inspired by his visit in the summer of 1832 to Jacksonville, Illinois, his poem romanticizes the flora and fauna of the prairie frontier and presents the landscape as a symbol that contains American themes of hope, abundance, self-reliance, and limitlessness.[1] After the appearance of "The Prairies" in the *Knickerbocker* (December 1833), a sheaf of verse about the prairies appeared in magazines, newspapers, and books. These prairie poems in general emulate Bryant's poem. Like Bryant's "The Prairies," the verses written by settlers in Illinois suggest that, as the popularity of the westward movement in America grew, versifiers drew on the images of the prairies to write poems that would be accepted by a mass, democratic audience; that would celebrate the Illinois prairie frontier; and that would associate that region with the developing nation. An examination of some verses by nineteenth-century prairie poets not only demonstrates the poetic temperament as it developed on the Illinois frontier; it helps identify the regional character of the Illinois prairies and helps explain the relationship between that regionalism and the broader national character.

Illinoisans popularized their prairies in a few poems written before Bryant's famous poem.[2] Before 1833 William Leggett of Illinois mentions prairies in "Lines Written on Leaving Illinois, Aug. 29, 1822." Here, Leggett associates the land and sky to draw on the major metaphorical significance of the prairied landscape — its nearness to the metaphysical realm, its nearness to God. About his two sisters he writes:

> Beneath the prairie turf they lie,
> And sweetest wild-flow'rs deck the sod;
> Their spirits soar beyond the sky
> In sweet communion with their God.[3]

Micah P. Flint, son of the western novelist Timothy Flint, published "The Mounds of Cahokia" in his father's *Recollections of Ten Years in the Mississippi Valley* in 1826. Written about the Indian burial mounds near Cahokia, Illinois, mounds similar to those Bryant writes of in "The Prairies," the poem also figuratively associates the sky with the mounds and develops at length another major theme of the prairie metaphor (as does Bryant's poem) — the past when the Indians flourished on the prairies. The prairies become a monument to the Indians in the last stanza of Flint's poem:

> Farewell; and may you still in peace repose.
> Still o'er you may the flowers, untrodden, bloom.
> And gently wave to every wind, that blows,
> Breathing their fragrance o'er each lonely tomb,
> Where, earthward mouldering, in the same dark womb,
> Ye mingle with the dust, from whence ye rose. (Stibitz, p. 9)

John Howard Bryant, William Cullen's brother, opens "A Sketch," which was printed in *The Illinois Monthly Magazine* (September 1831), with a brief description of a prairie setting:

> 'Twas summer in the land: thick leaves and flowers,
> Tall grass and grain were on the lap of June,
> The yellow sunlight trembled on the hills,
> The dewy hills fresh with the breath of morn;
> And o'er them smiled the golden summer skies. (Stibitz, p. 12)

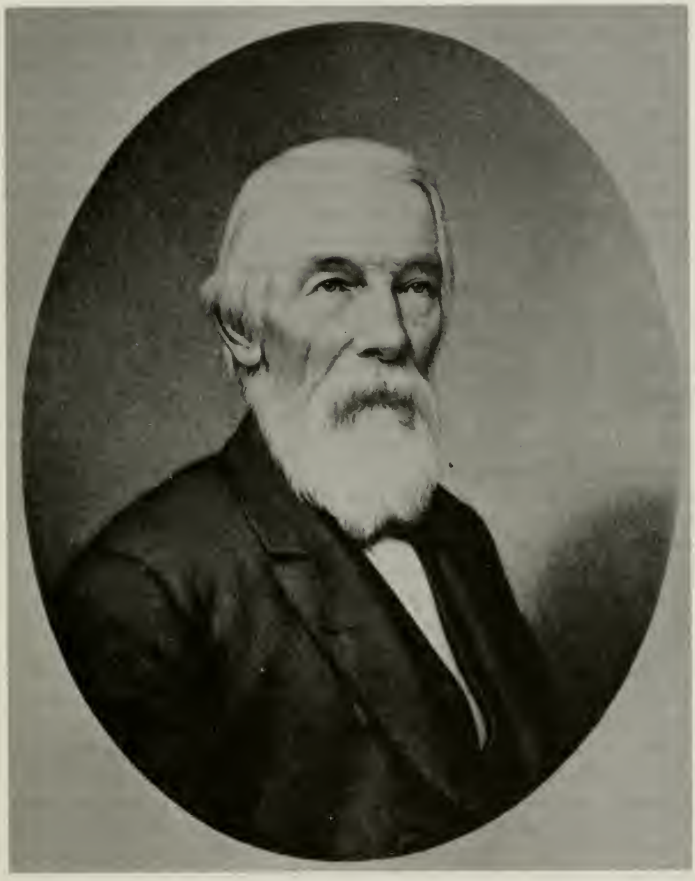
John Bryant's other prairie poems were written after his brother's "The Prairies." They include: "The Emigrant," "Indian Summer," "Senatchwine's Grave," "Drought," "The Emigrant's Song," "The Maples," and "Then and Now." Also, to mark several celebrations in Princeton, Illinois, he wrote a number of occasional poems which incidentally salute the prairies of Illinois. His references to the prairies, however, show that he thought they needed to be controlled and overcome before they could reveal their true beauty and worth. In "The Emigrant's Song," for example, the West is a "vast and desolate plain" to be crossed before the emigrants reach their home on the Pacific coast.[4]

"The Maples" demonstrates the speaker's control over the landscape:

> 'Tis six and forty summers,
> Since the naked prairie land,
> With the slender forest saplings,
> Was planted by my hand. (p. 102)

"Then and Now" glorifies the natural beauty of the prairie covered with flowers, but it also attests to the strength, fortitude, and perseverance of the settlers:

> Though scant at first our homely fare,
> A little industry and care,
> Soon brought abundance, and to spare;
> And the whole land was filled amain. (p. 181)



John H. Bryant

The prairies, to this man who lives on them, need to be cultivated before they can supply their abundance. Through the obstacles they present, the prairies prove the worth of the people living on them.

The lyrics of H., a poet who lived in Springfield, Illinois, during the early 1830s, are noteworthy because he lived on the prairies at a relatively early time and because he wrote many poems about the landscape and the culture that existed on it. An English immigrant, H. is known only by this initial, which he used to sign poems that he contributed to the Springfield *Sangamo Journal* from 1831 to 1846.[5] Publishing in the *Sangamo Journal* during this time, H. is significant to this study because he wrote prairie poems both before and after the first appearance of William Cullen Bryant's "The Prairies" in 1833. H.'s contribution to the prairie metaphor is twofold. First, his contribution lies in the dialect and vivid characterization that are demonstrated best in his satires. Second, and most important, H.'s contribution lies in the duality he depicts in the prairie landscape.

Some of H.'s best poems are satires, and some of these are written in Scots dialect — most likely because of the poet's liking for Robert Burns. The prairie figures significantly in two such poems. "Hame's the Best Place A'ter A'" (published December 1831) is a brief narrative about Satan's, "Auld Nickieben's," journey to and stay in Springfield, where he hopes to find a better life and more followers than in Hell. The shrewish prairie wife whom Satan marries in Springfield and the severe cold of the harsh environment, however, drive Satan back "hame" to Hell. Satan is obviously characterized as strong-willed in the beginning of the poem but, compared to the prairie dwellers, weak-willed at the end. The most complete characterization in this poem, however, is of the speaker. He is the one who portrays the harshness of Satan's wife and of the landscape, and the fact that he is in entire control of the narrative — and the character delineation — is underscored because Satan speaks in the same Scots dialect as the speaker of the poem. Thus, the dialect emphasizes the characterization of the speaker.

Another satire in Scots dialect, "To 'The Prairie Bard' " (January 1832), was actually written to John Howard Bryant, who lived in Jacksonville. In this poem the dialect obviously helps to characterize the speaker. He finds a kinship with The Prairie Bard, "his rhymin' brither," yet he also jests about the Prairie Bard's town. That Jacksonville has an inn pleases the speaker because, as he says, "I love gude cheer." Such a man would mock, with a light irony, Jacksonville's temperance. He says,

> . . . in your town nae man gets drunk,
> Nor can be found a single punk.
> Heigh, sirs, that I could say as much
> For Springfield, but I can't — in dutch![6]

Later, the speaker says that he hears temperance has advanced so far in Jacksonville that the ladies have given up their tea. After this banter, the speaker states his purpose in writing to the Prairie Bard — "That we maun

all our spunk display / Our common country to embellish" (p. 83). The dialect throughout this poem complements well the vivid character delineation of the speaker.

While H. introduces dialect into prairie poetry in these poems, it is not specifically the dialect of the frontiersman. Nonetheless, the dialect suggests the backwoodsy, rugged, and pluralistic quality of the prairies. The dialect also helps characterize the speaker as a certain type of prairie dweller — the adventurous European immigrant who wishes to better his lot in life. Indeed, it is this characterization that is one of H.'s most significant contributions to prairie poetry.

H.'s other major contribution is his development of the dualistic nature of the prairie landscape. While he writes some conventionally laudatory prairie poems, H. also writes about the harshness of the prairies, and in a much more serious tone than in "Hame's the Best Place A'ter A'."

"The Western Wilds" (March 1832) is a very conventional defense of the prairied West, and as such, it is laudatory. Written in response to Lydia Huntley Sigourney's "The Western Emigrant," it claims that the "western wilds" are not "sad," but gay. The following stanzas are representative of this poem:

> Behold our prairies spreading wide;
> In spring how green they be;
> The gallant steeds that o'er them ride,
> Away, exulting free!
>
> And he who strides the gallant steed
> A deeper joy must know,
> With Heaven's own blue above his head,
> And earth's bright flow'rs below! (p. 115)

In a tone as gushing as this (nearly half the stanzas end in exclamation points) the poem's forty-eight lines manage to include all these conventional prairie images: greenness, horses, deer, a wolf, a hunter, rugged men, and winds. And these themes: wideness, boundlessness, freedom, the ruggedness of prairie dwellers, the connection of sky and land, and one's closeness to God. As "The Western Wilds" wholly expresses a positive view of the prairies, poems like "Bards and Reviewers," "On the Arrival of the First Steam Boat," and "Winter Nights" contain numerous references that express a similarly complimentary view.

Other poems, however, depict the duality of the landscape. "To 'The Prairie Bard'," for example, necessarily draws on prairie images. H. suggests to "The Prairie Bard," his "rhymin' brither," that they both keep their "fancy on the wing," that they:

> Describe the blooming prairie green,
> As first in summer it is seen,
> Deck'd out in flow'ers o' golden sheen;
> When earth seems blended with the sky,
> And the keen hawk is circling high,

Like death aroun' us hovrin' by.
Then mark what solemn thoughts inspire
To see our prairies a' on fire;
Or far off in the wilderness,
At midnight hear the wolf's distress. (p. 83)

The green of the grass, the flowers, the sunshine are all conventional prairie images, as is the association of the physical earth with the metaphysical sky. But H. also introduces the ambiguousness of the prairies in this passage by first noting the glorious qualities of the landscape and then noting the negative qualities. The fire and the wolves contrapose the flowers and the sheen of the prairie. But most significantly, the hawk connotes death. This connotation contradicts the conventional association of hawk and freedom, an association that William Cullen Bryant makes later in "The Prairies." "Vernal Musings" (June 1832) reflects a similar ambivalence. As it celebrates the beauty of the prairie, for example, it also laments the displacement of native Americans from their land — another conventional topic that William Cullen Bryant develops more fully in "The Prairies."[7]

This ambiguousness inherent in the landscape is also a predominant theme in the whole body of H.'s prairie poems. Opposing the poems that celebrate the prairies are poems that clearly and forcefully depict the foreboding and destructive qualities of the prairies. The two references to the prairies in "Hame's the Best Place A'ter A'" do not allow full development of the worse-than-Hellish quality of the prairies, but the poem certainly adds this dimension to the prairie metaphor. "A Night on the Prairie" (May 1833), in addition, recounts a sleepless and fearful night spent without shelter on the prairie. Poems like "The Exile" (May 1832), "Sonnet" ("There is a charm in foreign lands to be" (June 1838), and "Il Melancolico per Amore" (June 1832) associate loneliness with the prairie and depict the prairie in comparison to civilized European countries as a natural and cultural wasteland.

Among the forboding qualities of the prairie is its severe weather, a topic that concerns a number of poems. Harsh rain and snow storms plague the prairie dwellers and travelers, and the mud of autumn is particularly distressing. The extreme heat of summer is the subject of "Travelling the Prairie in Summer" (July 1832) and "Sonnet" ("Fierce overhead the fervid dogstar reigns" (August 1832)), both of which depict a traveler at the mercy of the prairie sun. The sestet of "Sonnet" is the most forceful description:

Now one wide blaze of heat beams all around;
No zephry stirs the air, no breezes blow.
The traveller faint, with eyes that seek the ground,
Moves on his course, irresolute and slow;
And every living thing, by heat opprest,
Seeks some cool cover for a place of rest. (p. 136)

"Lines on the Approach of Winter" (January 1832) associates the extremes of winter on the prairie with death:

> Now the wild prairie to the view
> Appears in autumn's sober hue—
> And, past her summer's flow'ry pride,
> Looks like some lone and widow'd bride—
> 'Till at last, advancing cold,
> Another season we behold,
> And instead of lively green
> The winding sheet of winter's seen.
> Now piercing winds, and driving hail,
> The weary, wandering wretch assail—
> Who hails with joy the friendly light
> That guides him in his course aright. (p. 117)

"Wolves" (January 1846) combines the threat of winter with the threat posed by wild animals. As night descends, a lone traveler begins to panic: he "plunges through the snowy waste" but is defeated by the harsh conditions, "Till down he sinks at last, and black despair / Brings hideous shapes and fancies to his eyes" (p. 121). As the traveler lies in the snow in terror, the wolves approach, "ready to devour" him. Finally, as the traveler calls to heaven "in vain," the environment mocks his situation ironically:

> No help is nigh — to heaven he calls in vain—
> While the pale moon, as if to mock his woe,
> Shines calm and cold upon the pallid scene. (p. 121)

These last lines, as they call attention to the mockery, do not simply connote a disinterested environment, but a malevolent one.

H.'s major contributions to prairie poetry are the use of dialect and vivid characterization and the depiction of the prairie's dualism. John Hay, a nationally recognized midwestern poet, develops the use of prairie dialect and prairie characters more fully in the 1870s.[8] Nonetheless, H. breaks the ground for Hay's later developments. H.'s most significant contribution to prairie poetry, however, is his thorough depiction of the prairie's dualistic nature. While John E. Hallwas is right in saying that H.'s poems lack "metaphoric complexity," his poems do attest to his broad range in depicting the various moods and figurative associations of the prairies.[9] H. goes beyond the simplistic depiction of the prairie as completely benevolent. He also avoids the opposite extreme of depicting it as completely malevolent, which is what his countryman Charles Dickens does in *American Notes for General Circulation* (1842).[10] Rather, H. catches both extremes in poems like 'Winter Nights," "Vernal Musings," "To the Frogs," "Sonnet" ("Still lingers winter; and the blust'ring wind"), and "Sonnet" ("The sullen hours on leaden pinions fly"), and he adequately covers the moods and attitudes toward the prairies that exist between those extremes.

H. wrote poetry for the *Sangamo Journal* both before and after William

Cullen Bryant's first appearance of "The Prairies," and while some of H.'s imagery overlaps with Bryant's, one cannot say that his poems are derivative of Bryant's poem. Other prairie poets, however, wrote poems after the appearance of Bryant's "The Prairies" which do derive images and themes from Bryant's poem. Alvin Robinson, who made his home in Chicago, echoes Bryant's reference to "Breezes of the South" that "pass the prairie-hawk" and that have "played / Among the palms of Mexico." In "Summer on the Prairies" Robinson writes that "two pilgrim birds," who are flying northward, "tell of isles in a southern sea, / And the shores of Mexico."[11] In "The Western Pioneer" John J. Piatt of Indiana writes about the vision of future "domes of cities vast" (Coggeshall, p. 667), an image which compares to Bryant's vision of the civilized prairies — where "that advancing multitude . . . soon shall fill these deserts." Two other similarities exist between Piatt's and Bryant's poems: the bees are the first pioneers, and the future white emigrants will displace the Indians.

J. K. Mitchell's poem "The Song of the Prairie" is a good example of the prairie poems written by Illinois poets for a few reasons. First, William Cullen Bryant included Mitchell's poem in *Selections from the American Poets* (1874). Second, the quality of the poem is representative. Finally, Mitchell packs nearly all the conventional prairie images into this fifty-six line poem. The poem begins:

> O! Fly to the prairie, sweet maiden, with me,
> 'Tis as green and as wide as the sea:
> O'er its soft silken bosom the summer winds glide,
> And wave that wild grass in its billowy pride.
>
> The city's a prison too narrow for thee—
> Then away to the prairies so boundless and free:
> Where the sight is not check'd till the prairie and skies,
> In harmony blending, commingle their dyes.[12]

These two stanzas manage to mention the nurturing "bosom," the wildness, the sea, grass, winds, freedom, boundlessness, union of sky and land, and unchecked sight (which is close to Bryant's lines: "the dilated sight / Takes in the encircling vastness"). Mitchell continues by listing the names of animals and plants that appear on the prairies: fawns, bison, eagle, prairie-hen, mocking-bird, katydid, prairie-rose. It is typical of this type of poem, too, that all these images are left undeveloped. Again echoing Bryant, who says that the "speech of England has no name" for the prairies, Mitchell faults England too: "Let England exult in her dogs and her chase — / O! what's a king's park to this limitless space!"

Two Illinois poets deserve to be compared here because together they express, as H.'s prairie poems do, the duality of the prairie. Unlike H., however, these poets are not individually balanced; rather, each takes the opposite extreme. The first example represents the typical laudatory poem written by an Illinoisan while the second shows that not every westerner shared this exuberance about his environment. B. F. Stribling's poem is titled "Illinois":

A country in the distant west
With fertile soil is largely blest
With prairies spreading wide;
In summer time full dress'd in green
Like meadows large, they may be seen
With blossoms deck'd in pride.

Here Nature's gifts are lavished wide
Profusely as an eastern bride
With gems be-spangled o'er;
And when the sun to rest retires
And smothers out his radiant fires,
By us is seen no more.

In slumbers sweet he dreams all night
Of beauteous scenes that caught his sight
This country trav'ling o'er;
And when he wakes at break of day
On golden cars he rides away
To view this land once more.

He calls up then the moon his bride
And down he sits near by her side
And takes her by the hand;
If ever I shall cease to run
And be to earth a radiant sun
I'll settle in this land. (Stibitz, p. 21)

M. H. Jenks's "Farewell to Illinois" posits an opposite perspective:

Illinois, adieu to thy flies and mosquitoes,
  Thy black, muddy roads, with their soil three feet deep;
I was anxious to gaze on thy beautiful features,
  But in parting I feel no desire to weep.

Farewell to thy dark green alluvial ocean,
  Thy rank waving tall grass and cattle in herds;
Thy "fever and ague," creating emotion
  Expressive of feelings much louder than words.

I passed o'er thy valley by day and nocturnal,
  Thy sun made my head ache, thy moon gave a chill;
And I now write it down for my friends and the Journal,
  'Tis my first and last visit, let what happen will.

I had heard of thy beauty, been told of thy treasures,
  Of thy wild game and wild flowers "blushing unseen";
I long had been anxious to taste of thy pleasures,
  Forgetting that pleasures were followed by pain.

Adieu, Illinois! and to all thy pale livers,
  Thy lily-faced ladies and yellow-skinned men,
I entered thee smiling, and leave with the shivers;
  Let other folks love thee, but I never can. (Stibitz, p. 20)

Jenks also draws on all the conventional imagery, but with a refreshing sense of humor that shows he recognizes the cliches of prairie poetry. The

earth is not a garden, but a sucking mud-hole. Jenks adeptly reverses Bryant's connotations of "rank," which here become pejorative rather than positive. The entire poem, furthermore, recalls accurately some of Bryant's opinions about the prairies as he records them in his letters.[13]

As Jenks's poem shows an extreme development in the use of the prairie landscape, so does John Hay's poetry. Though he wrote some conventional prairie poetry, notably "Centennial" and "The Prairie," Hay also published *The Pike County Ballads and Other Pieces* in 1871.[14] These *Pike County Ballads*, written by a resident of Illinois, both celebrate and joke about life and people on the Illinois prairies. They add dialect, local color, and fuller character development to prairie poetry. As do H.'s prairie poems, they also depict the dualistic nature of the prairies.

The topics of these poems range from the antics of four cronies who pledge temperance for one year in "The Pledge at Spunky Point: A Tale of Earnest Effort and Human Perfidy" to the vocal defense of a crippled black man's right to membership in the community in "Banty Tim (Remarks of Sergeant Tilmon Joy to the White Man's Committee of Spunky Point, Illinois)." Collectively, the various topics of the *Pike County Ballads* reveal the life and people of the prairie frontier. The two poems which most directly concern the prairie are "Little Breeches" and "Benoni Dunn."

"Little Breeches" is the story of a young boy aboard a runaway wagon in a deadly, Illinois prairie snow-storm. The boy's father, the speaker of the poem, introduces himself:

> I don't go much on religion,
> I never ain't had no show;
> But I've got a middlin' tight grip, sir,
> On the handful o' things I know.
> I don't pan out on the prophets
> And free-will, and that sort of thing, —
> But I b'lieve in God and the angels,
> Ever since one night last spring. (Hay, p. 6)

This simple faith and down-to-earth candor characterizes the morality of the frontier people of Pike county.

Later in the poem, the father's acceptance of the boy's fate in the storm demonstrates the pioneers' acceptance of natural phenomena. Finding the horses and wagon, but not the boy, the search team assumes that Little Breeches has wandered off, gotten lost in the storm, and succumbed to the harshness of the prairie. As the sky darkens, the men, knowing of a sheepfold nearby, retire there for the night. As the reader expects, they find Little Breeches there, warm and comfortable among the sheep and innocently oblivious to his dangerous situation. The father ends the poem by asserting that the angels guided the boy to the fold:

> And I think that saving a little child,
> And fotching him to his own,
> Is a derned sight better business
> Than loafing around the Throne. (Hay, p. 9)

John Hay

The dualistic prairie has the power to kill or return the boy. Because Little Breeches remains innocent and because the father accepts his son's fate, Little Breeches is spared. Neither father nor son is in conflict with his environment, but each is sympathetic — even empathetic — with it.

"Benoni Dunn" delineates the opposite type of prairie dweller than does "Little Breeches." While "Benoni Dunn" is not collected among the *Pike County Ballads*, it is in subject, mood, and setting very much a Pike county ballad. The poem consists of a monologue spoken by Benoni Dunn — a poor, prairie farmer from Pike county. Dunn's philosophical musings are framed by the voice of the speaker, who is sitting on a fence talking with Dunn. The speaker establishes the setting in stanza one:

> Prairie and timber were glorious
> In the love of the hot young sun,
> But a philosophic gloom possessed
> The soul of Benoni Dunn. (p. 225)

After this introduction, Dunn asserts his philosophical position immediately:

> Nothin' in all this 'varsal yerth
> Is like what it ort to be. (p. 225)

Dunn believes that everything in this world works according to the principle of inversion:

> The weaker a feller's stummick may be,
> The bigger his dinner, you bet,
> And the more he don't care a damn for cash,
> The richer he's sure to get. (p. 225)

Because the world functions according to this principle, Dunn need not work himself. The implication of his philosophy is: working will not lead to gain; not working, conversely, will lead to success.

Dunn reiterates his principle in stanza five:

> Everything works contrary —
> You never knows what to do:
> Ef I sow in wheat I'll wish it was corn
> Afore the fall is through.
> And talk about pleasure — ef I was axed
> The thing that most I love,
> I'd say it's gingerbread — and that
> I git the littlest uv. (pp. 226-27)

Dunn makes the wrong choice about what to plant, and unwilling to accept responsibility for his choice, he is dissatisfied with the results. He loves gingerbread, but will not make himself any. Instead, he expects to "git" it without any effort. Dunn is never rewarded, so, filled with regret and hate, he develops his cynical philosophy.

The speaker closes the poem with this condemnation of Dunn:

And this was the sum of the thinking
  Of tall Benoni Dunn, —
While gay in weeds his cornfield laughed
  In the light of the kindly sun.
Ruminant thus he maundered,
  With a scowl on his tangled brow,
With gaps in his fence, and hate in his heart,
  And rust on his idle plough. (p. 227)

Dunn's unattended field (in "weeds" of mourning, if we recognize the ironic pun), broken fence, and rusty plow speak loudly against him. He is shiftless. He has, in part at least, brought his bitterness upon himself.

This character sketch of Benoni Dunn, however, is more than an exposé of a lazy farmer. The poem does not simply suggest that man is the cause of his own problems on the prairie. Dunn is beaten, in part, by his environment. Because of the combination of personal laziness and a disobliging environment, he can come to no other conclusion than to give up: " 'I've give up tryin' to see the nub — / It's too hefty a job fer me' " (pp. 225 and 227), he states twice in the poem. The prairie setting established at the beginning of the poem and the images of the cornfield, the fence, and the plow at the end are strategically placed clues to indicate what has beaten Dunn. These opening and closing images in the poem stress man's relationship to the prairie, particularly his need to cultivate it. However, the prairie is a hard environment to tame: it demands constant labor with specially fashioned tools. It will stake its claim on the human who tries to work it.

The humor of "Benoni Dunn" somewhat mitigates the extent to which Dunn is harmed by the prairie environment. His comic monologue and character indicate that he is not totally destroyed by the exacting landscape. Nonetheless, the prairie has forced him to adopt his cynical philosophy — which will keep him inactive and check any tendency he may have to work in order to better his circumstances.

Of course, the prairie could not harm Dunn if he had more fortitude and perseverance. The prairie at its most severe does not destroy Little Breeches because he remains innocent and because his father accepts his son's fate. As Dunn strives against his natural situation — through his philosophy of experience, cynicism, and nonacceptance — he is overwhelmed by the prairie. According to Hay in these poems, the prairie is in itself neither cruel nor malevolent, but dualistic. The harsh and unaccommodating prairie separates the weak-willed from the strong-willed pioneers. It separates those individuals empathetic with it from those inimical to it.

Collectively, most of these poems by prairie poets testify to William Cullen Bryant's influence, and they identify Bryant's "The Prairies" as the first noteworthy poem about the prairies. That his poem was inspired by the Illinois prairies around Jacksonville asserts the importance of that region. These Illinois poets also demonstrate the extent to which their

prairies had become popular as subject matter for American versifiers and their audiences. H., especially, emphasizes this popularity since he does not clearly imitate William Cullen Bryant. Thus, these Illinois poets testify to the importance of this landscape as a poetic device which could help to make American poetry unique. Furthermore, the attention given by some of these versifiers to dialect, to character development, to local color, and to the dualistic nature of the prairies begins to unearth more of the metaphorical significance of the prairies.

NOTES

[1]For analyses of Bryant's "The Prairies" see Edwin R. Booher, "The Garden Myth in 'The Prairies,' " *Western Illinois Regional Studies* 1 (1978): 15-26; Ralph N. Miller, "Nationalism in Bryant's 'The Prairies,' " *American Literature* 21 (1949): 227-32; and Paul A. Newlin, *"The Prairies* and 'The Prairies': Cooper's and Bryant's Views of Manifest Destiny," *William Cullen Bryant and His America: Centennial Conference Proceedings, 1878-1978*, eds. Stanley Brodwin and Michael D'Innocenzo (New York: AMS, 1983), 27-38.

During this visit, William Cullen and his brother John, who had moved to Jacksonville the year before, spent two weeks riding horse-back over the prairies. Bryant's letters from this time recount the journey minutely, and later letters to his friend Richard Henry Dana indicate strongly that this trip to Illinois truly inspired the romanticized view of the prairies in his poem. See Charles H. Brown, *William Cullen Bryant* (New York: Scribner's, 1971), 203-207, 217-18; Steve Olson, "William Cullen Bryant's View of Prairie America's Conflicting Values," *North Dakota Quarterly* 53.4 (1985): 35-43; and William Cullen Bryant, *The Letters of William Cullen Bryant,* eds. William Cullen Bryant, II, and Thomas G. Voss, 4 vols. (New York: Fordham UP, 1975-84), vol. 1, passim.

[2]A necessary anthology for the study of Illinois literature is John E. Hallwas, ed., *Illinois Literature: The Nineteenth Century* (Macomb: Illinois Heritage Press, 1986). E. Earle Stibitz, *Illinois Poets: A Selection* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1968), includes a few nineteenth-century Illinois poets. A helpful anthology of nineteenth-century midwestern poetry is Bernard F. Engel and Patricia W. Julius, eds., *A New Voice for a New People: Midwestern Poetry, 1800-1910* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985.

John T. Flanagan writes a useful summary about poetry in the early midwest ("Poetic Voices in the Early Middle West," *Centennial Review* 24 (1980): 269-83). John E. Hallwas characterizes nineteenth-century Illinois poetry specifically in "Illinois Poetry: The Lincoln Era," *Selected Papers in Illinois History, 1981*, ed. Bruce D. Cody (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1982), 15-23.

The following reference works are helpful: Ralph Leslie Rusk's *The Literature of the Middle Western Frontier*, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia UP, 1925), particularly vol. 1: 303-51 and vol. 2: 354-62; Dorothy Anne Dondore, *The Prairie and the Making of Middle America: Four Centuries of Description* (Cedar Rapids: Torch Press, 1926), 239-87; Robert Bray, ed., *A Reader's Guide to Illiniois Literature* (Springfield: Illinios State Library, 1985).

[3]On Leggett see Stibitz, 3. After leaving Illinois Leggett became assistant editor of the *New York Evening Post* under Bryant. (Subsequent references to Stibitz will be noted in the text.)

[4]John Howard Bryant, *Poems, Written from Youth to Old Age, 1824-1884* (Princeton, IL: T. P. Streeter, 1885), pp. 88-89. (Subsequent references to John Howard Bryant are from this edition and will be cited in the text.) See also John E. Hallwas, "The Poetry of John Howard Bryant," *MidAmerica 7* (1980): 27-39

[5]John E. Hallwas assesses H.'s achievement in "Introduction," *The Poems of H.: The Lost Poet of Lincoln's Springfield,* ed. John E. Hallwas (Peoria, IL: Ellis Press, 1982), 1-39. Hallwas suggests that H. "is the finest poet of his era in the Midwest" (39). H. probably lived in Springfield from the late 1820s to 1833 or 1834.

In *Illinois Literature* (page 65) Hallwas notes that H.'s name might be John Hancock.

Before coming to America, H. also published twenty-three poems in the London *Literary Gazette* betweem 1818-1825.

[6]*The Poems of H.*, 81, 82. (Subsequent quotations from H.'s poems are from this edition and will be cited in the text.)

[7]Philip Freneau hints at this topic at the end of "The Indian Burial Ground" in 1787, and William Cullen Bryant writes to it directly in "An Indian at the Burial-Place of His Fathers" (1824) and "The Disinterred Warrior" (1827).

[8]According to John E. Hallwas, John Hay was the most popular midwestern poet of the nineteenth century. See "Introduction," 1 and *Illinois Literature*, 148.

[9]Hallwas, "Introduction," 39. While he notes this lack of complexity, Hallwas states that H. can be favorably compared with William Cullen Bryant, John Greenleaf Whittier, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, and Philip Freneau.

[10]See Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Circulation* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 215-26.

[11]William Turner Coggeshall, ed., *The Poets and Poetry of the West* (New York: Arno, 1975; reprint of 1860 text), 588. (Subsequent references to Coggeshall's anthology will be noted in the text.)

[12]Rufus Wilmot Griswold, ed., *The Poets and Poetry of America* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1848), 514. (Subsequent references to Griswold's anthology will be noted in the text).

[13]See Olson and note 1.

[14]Hay's "The Prairie" (1858) is essentially a catalog of conventional prairie images: animals, plants, sky, grass, shadows, clouds, horizon, breeze, sunbeams. Reflections of William Cullen Bryant's "The Prairies" are obvious, especially the use of oceanic imagery. In both poems wave-like undulations are created on the prairie by the shadows of passing clouds. As this image occurs in lines 6-8 of Bryant's poem, it also introduces Hay's poem:

And flickering o'er the tufted grass
  The shifting shadows go,
Vague-sailing, where the feathery clouds
  Fleck white the tranquil skies. (lines 3-6, 148)

Hay's "The Prairie" also associates the metaphysical sky with the physical land. The poem begins:

The skies are blue above my head,
  The prairie green below. (148)

The poem ends with the same image, adding God's presence to it:

Far in the West the glowing plain
  Melts warmly in the sky.
No accent wounds the reverent air,
  No footprint dints the sod, —
Lone in the light the prairie lies,
  Rapt in a dream of God. (150)

All quotations from John Hay's poems are from *The Complete Poetical Works of John Hay* (Boston: Houghton, 1917; reprint New York: AMS, 1970).

See also John E. Hallwas, "The Varieties of Humor in John Hay's Pike County Ballads," *MidAmerica* 5 (1978): 7-18.

THE END OF ERIC JANSONISM: RELIGIOUS LIFE IN BISHOP HILL IN THE POST-COLONY PERIOD

Lilly Setterdahl

The Bishop Hill Colony was the only religious colony in the United States founded and maintained by Swedes. It lasted a little more than fifteen years. Numerous utopian colonies flourished in the 1800s, but most were short-lived.

Jansonism did not actually become an established sect since it did not last more than one generation. It has been said that people attracted to religious sects come from the lower classes as a rule, while the upper classes tend to join established denominations.[1] As the Jansonists gained social status in the United States, many of them joined established denominations, but most preferred to remain affiliated. Upon the dissolution of the Bishop Hill Colony, the villagers were free to join the church of their choice. Before going into the various denominations formed at Bishop Hill, we will consider what happened to the former colonists in general and what effect the Jansonist movement had on emigration from Sweden and reforms there.

The former colonists settled mainly either on the farmland which was alloted to them at the time of division or in Galva, where they had received town lots. Since the buildings at Bishop Hill were divided among the former colonists, some people remained there in a room or apartment which they now owned.[2] Those who for financial or other reasons did not keep their allotments often moved further west, where land was less expensive. Many former colonists settled in Kansas and Nebraska. Wherever they went they found use for the skills which they had acquired in the colony. People from Bishop Hill and their descendants eventually spread to almost every part of the Union. One family and several single persons moved back to Sweden, but most of the Jansonists never returned to their homeland. The majority became farmers and craftsmen in the American Midwest and on the Great Plains. Many young men enlisted in

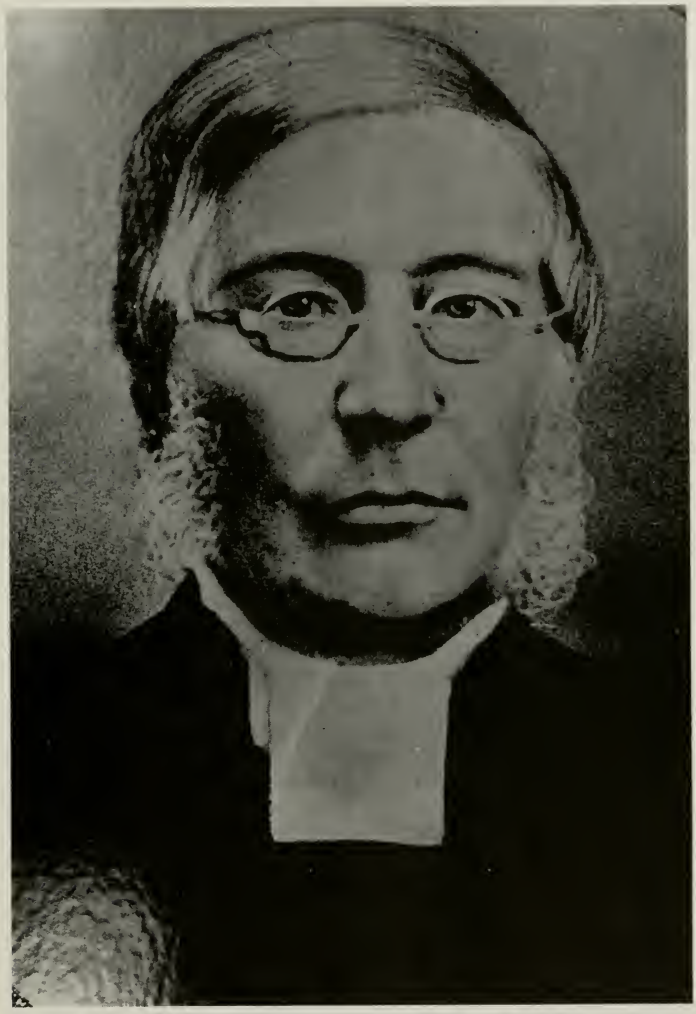
the Civil War, Company D 57th Infantry Regiment under Captain Eric Forsse, Bishop Hill. They were engaged in battles at Fort Donelson, Shiloh, and Corinth. A few advanced in military ranks. Eric Berglund became the first Swede to enter West Point. Eric Johnson, the son of the colony founder, reached captain's rank before he was forced to leave due to ill health. He later became the editor and publisher of several newspapers. He also co-authored a book, *Svenskarne i Illinois,* which included Bishop Hill. Jonas W. Olson, the son of Olof Olsson, the first Jansonist to reach America, became the first Swede to be admitted to the Illinois Bar Association (1869) and the first Swede to be elected to the Illinois Legislature (1870).[3] Many of the former colonists became successful businessmen.

The exodus of Jansonists in 1846 was followed by the emigration of over a million Swedes between 1850 and 1930. The ships that carried passengers to the new world and letters from the emigrants on the return trip were important tools in this development. The vessels sailing the ocean between Sweden and North America in the 1840s were iron-ore cargo ships. These were equipped to carry only a few passengers. When large groups of Jansonists began to emigrate, the ship owners saw the opportunity and started to convert parts of their ships for passengers. Except for those aboard a ship that capsized and some who died at sea the Jansonists made it to American shores and wrote letters home to prove it. These, along with letters from other Swedish emigrants, were published in newspapers in Sweden and aroused a feverish interest in America. Swedes began to leave their homeland to seek greater economic opportunities especially in the American Midwest. The increase in emigration hastened the introduction of reforms in Sweden.

In 1854 the distilling of spirits for home use was prohibited. In 1858 the Conventicle Edict was removed. The same year, un-married women of twenty-five were no longer required to have a guardian.[4] A step in the direction of religious freedom was taken in 1860, when members of the Swedish Church by law were given the right to join other denominations. In 1864 a parlamentary reform abolished the old *standsriksdag* which had been represented only by nobility, clergy, burghers, and land-owning peasants.

Despite the reforms, there was an increase in emigration in the late 1860s due to poor harvests. The late seventies saw the stream of emigration dwindle, but this was only temporary. The steadily growing population and strong competition from the industrialized Europe brought the emigration to its peak in 1882, when 64,607 people left Sweden.[5] Most of the emigrants were young and left mainly for economic reasons, although social injustices continued to play an important role.

American industry absorbed many of these later immigrants. In northwestern Illinois Swedish men found employment in the coal mines, on farms, or perhaps at the implement factories in Moline. Many came to join relatives who had arrived earlier. Swedish women could easily obtain em-



Rev. Lars P. Esbjorn

ployments as servants in American cities. The improved communications and the fact that United States welcomed immigrants made emigration less adventurous than in the days of the Jansonist movement. The increased emigration from Sweden led to the founding of Swedish Churches in America.

The Reverend Lars P. Esbjorn, Hille, north of Gavle, was the first ordained minister to emigrate, which he did in 1849. He settled in Andover, Illinois, where he founded a Swedish-Lutheran congregation in 1850, which later received the distinction of being the mother church of the Augustana Synod. An earlier congregation had been formed by laymen in New Sweden, Iowa, in 1848, but no official records of that founding exist. Within a period of four years the Andover Lutherans erected a small church, now known as the Jenny Lind Chapel in memory of the Swedish nightingale who had donated funds towards the building. Among the charter members was Eric U. Norberg, who later served as secretary of the Bishop Hill Colony for several years.[6]

Esbjorn also organized Lutheran congregations in Moline and Galesburg in 1850 and in Knoxville 1853. Other university educated ministers followed in Esbjorn's footsteps. They were Tuve N. Hasselquist (Knoxville and Galesburg); Erland Carlsson (Chicago and Andover); Jonas Swensson (Sugar Grove, Pennsylvania and Andover). But Reverend Esbjorn and his fellow Swedish ministers realized that pastors from Sweden could not possibly fill the need for leadership among the growing Swedish population in America. To alleviate the problem, the Augustana Theological Seminary was founded in Chicago in 1860 to educate young Swedes and Norwegians to become ministers for the Scandinavian immigrants in America. Reverend Esbjorn became the first president. Having accomplished what he felt was his duty and call in America, Esbjorn returned to Sweden in 1863.

In the late 1860s the so-called Mission Friends (now the Evangelical Covenant Church of America) began to separate from the Augustana Synod. Still retaining the Lutheran name, the first Mission Friends societies began to form in Swede Bend, Iowa, and Chicago, Illinois, in 1868. The respective leaders were C. A. Bjork and J. M. Sanngren. The first Mission Synod was organized in 1873. Another, the Ansgarii Synod, was founded the following year. It had its own school, the Ansgarii College in Knoxville, Illinois, from which the Mission Friends received many of its leaders. Others came from Sweden, as for instance Eric August Skogsbergh in 1876. He visited many Swedish settlements among them Bishop Hill. In 1885, the two Mission Synods were replaced with the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant Church of America. Reverend Skogsbergh stands as the founder of the Covenant School in Minneapolis in 1891, a forerunner to North Park College and Theological Seminary, Chicago, founded in 1894. In Sweden, the Mission Friends had organized a separate denomination in 1878. Its foremost leader was Dr. Paul Waldenstrom.[7]

Other Swedish churches attracting Swedes were the Baptist, the Methodist, and the Adventist. The first Swedish Baptist church in America was founded in Rock Island in 1852 by Reverend Gustaf Palmquist, one of the leaders of the Baptist faith in Sweden. The Swedish Baptist General Conference was founded in 1879.[8]

Olof G. Hedstrom is considered to be the father of Swedish Methodism in America, but his brother, Jonas J. Hedstrom, founded the first Swedish Methodist church in America at Victoria, Illinois, in 1846.[9] The Northwestern Swedish Methodist Conference was organized in 1877.[10] Some Swedes belonged to American Methodist congregations.

The history of Adventism as a sect goes back to William Miller (1782-1849) who predicted that the world would come to an end on October 22, 1844." (The second coming of Christ). Simultaneously, so-called *"ropare"* ("callers") who were actually children, began to predict that Judgment Day was near in Sweden. An analogue can here be drawn with Eric Jansson's teaching which also began in earnest in 1843. Similar movements occurred in other countries. Out of the Millerite movement grew the Seventh-day Adventist church as the largest body of Adventists.[12] The name was officially adopted in 1860 and an organization took place in May of 1863.

Many of the first Swedes who became Seventh-day Adventists had previously been Baptists. Such was the case in Village Creek, Iowa, where a congregation consisting of thirteen people was officially founded on May 10, 1874.[13] In 1910 enough Swedes had joined the Seventh-day Adventists in America to necessitate a Swedish Seminary, which was founded at La Grange, Illinois. It was later to be known as Broadview College and Theological Seminary.[14]

Although the Shaker doctrine never claimed more than a few Jansonists, it created quite a stir in the colony in 1855 when certain colonists returned from the Shakers in Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, with whom they had been in contact since 1848, and attempted to introduce the celibacy doctrine in Bishop Hill. When unsuccessful, one of the men, Anders Blomberg, returned to the Shaker Colony. Later, Eric Jansson's widow, Sophia, also joined the Shakers at Pleasant Hill, but returned and died in Galva.

The first non-Jansonists congregation formed at Bishop Hill was the First Swedish Methodist Church which was organized in 1864 by Reverend A. J. Anderson of Andover. According to the congregational records, the first meetings were held in the Bishop Hill school house and in private homes. The congregation started out with twenty members. In 1870, it had 187 members "in full connection." A church was built in 1869. Former colony trustee Olof Stoneberg acted as local lay-preacher.[15]

In 1866 a Lutheran congregation was founded at Bishop Hill by Reverend Sannqvist of Galva. The Lutheran congregations in Galva and Kewanee were organized the same year.[16] The membership in the Bishop Hill Lutheran congregation consisted of people who had come directly from Sweden to Bishop Hill after the Civil War and by Swedes who had

Swedish Methodist Church

Old Colony Church

moved from Berlin (Swedona), Illinois. No former Bishop Hill colonists can be detected in the membership book.[17] When pastor Sannqvist left in 1870, it was decided to amalgate the Bishop Hill, Kewanee, and Galva churches into one pastorate, with the pastor residing in Galva. These three congregations called Nils Nordgren, a student at the Lutheran Seminary in Paxton, Illinois, as their pastor. He was ordained in Galesburg in 1872.[18]

The Swedish-American Lutherans were not popular among the former Jansonists. Apparently there was persecution in reverse to what the case had been in Sweden. Some former Jansonists accepted Esbjorn as their religious teacher following their departure from Bishop Hill. The daughter of Eric Jansson, Mathilda, became a Lutheran when she married Anders Gustav Verner of Andover.[19]

Accounts written by Swedish ministers of various denominations describe the Jansonists whom they encountered as very demonstrative, almost ebulliant, as long as they believed in Jansonism; yet, there was one doctrine which was readily accepted by those who still worshipped at the Old Colony Church, and that was Second Adventism.

It was in September 1867 that the Adventist faith was introduced at Bishop Hill. On November 18, 1867, no less than one-hundred-fifty former Jansonists were baptized.[20] Although many sources describe the Adventist congregation at Bishop Hill as being Seventh-day, older and more reliable sources refer to it as Second Adventist or independent Second Adventists. That Second-Adventist groups existed as late as 1875 is evident from a letter written by Anders Larsson. Larsson who lived in Chicago, wrote about the Second Adventists in that city saying that they had gathered on April 18, 1875, for the second coming of Christ, having sold and given away everything that they owned. About the Adventists at Bishop Hill, he says that they were more careful, but that they, nevertheless, had been ready. He also stated that "E. J.'s /Eric Jansson's most faithful followers had become Second Adventists, believing that the soul dies with the body until judgment day."[21]

The most reliable printed source has to be Eric Johnson, the son of the founder in *Svenskarne i Illinois.* The reason for him having a co-author (C. F. Peterson) was, according to his sister's granddaughter, Edla Warner, that he did not master Swedish well enough to write a book in that language. He was eight years old when he came to America. The following paragraph in the Johnson-Peterson book of 1880 sheds some light on the Adventist movement in Bishop Hill:

> We have already seen how the Shakers early on began to shake the Jansonist Temple and the foundation it stood on, leaving cracks in the surrounding walls. Further damage . . . was applied in September 1867, the year these strange people calling themselves Second Adventists . . . landed a blow to the already dilapidated and poorly defended church.[22]

The authors explained that Second Adventists are "those who foresee and daily expect the second coming of Christ. According to their literal

interpretation of the Scriptures, Christ will descend from the sky with a body visible to the human eye. At that moment He will turn the earth into the paradise it once was, the good people becoming the new inhabitants and the evil becoming grass or nothing."[23] One has to assume that Eric Johnson knew that this was the way the faith was perceived at Bishop Hill. The authors continued,

> The mission succeeded. At the time, the colony people were divided in several groups with various beliefs constantly arguing. Nothing was easier than recruiting proselytes for a new strange faith, something unusual, begging for support of mysticism and mysticism was a typical requirement among the colony people . . . The Adventists came with a brand new faith and they could not be blamed for that which had happened to the Colony in the past. Besides, the dispatched apostles were rather clever, eg. had talent for persuation . . . Americans, of course. Their labor soon bore fruit. No less than 150 former Jansonists became members of the Adventist church in 1870 /should be 1867/ by means of baptism and organized a congregation at once. It was not long, however, before this new body was divided in two . . . one remained faithful to the beliefs that the missionaries had preached, while the other felt that they had to change some parts of the doctrine. The former party was led and still is led by J. E. Hallsen, Peter Wexell and others, the other by Jonas Olson, a man with unusual abilities and a born leader who can accomplish much both good and evil.[24]

Olson's independence was also stressed by Eric U. Norberg, the former colony secretary, in a letter to Anders Larsson in 1880. Referring to the revival in 1867, Norberg wrote about Jonas Olson, "his dead bones came alive as they began to move in the direction which he had calculated. As soon as the outside help had achieved the revival, they were kicked out, as were Skogsberg(h) later on, and Jonas Olson alone became the spiritual leader. Holding the power over the people, he, at once, began to preach and attack all who took part in the case against the trustees."[25]

One early scholarly researcher on the Bishop Hill Colony, Michael Mikkelsen, interviewed Jonas Olson for his book which was published in 1892. On basis of this interview, Mikkelson stated that the congregation led by Jonas Olson was independent Second Adventist.[26]

Philip Stoneberg, born in the Colony 1875, is inconsistent, sometimes labeling the congregation Second Adventist, sometimes Seventh-day. L. Kiner, editor of *History of Henry County, Illinois*, is misquoting Johnson and Peterson, saying that the congregation was Seventh-day adventist. Checking the reference to the page, one finds the original source stating "Second Adventist."

Unfortunately the congregational records are not specific. The membership book is labeled "Church on the Hill." No where does the record book state that the congregation was Adventist of any kind. It contains names and data from November 18, 1867, when one hundred fifty former Jansonists were baptized, through November, 1882. This book also contains the minutes of two meetings, one of which was held 1867, and

the other 1870. The first trustees elected in 1867 were G. W. Foster, Jonas Olson, and Olof Osberg. S. Bjorklund was elected to keep membership records. On December 17, 1870, the name was changed to "Swedish Church at Bishop Hill." Swan Bjorklund acted as chairman and O. Blomberg as secretary, pro tem. The trustees elected were Erich Alin, Olof Osberg, and Jonas Olson. On December 19, 1870, Jonas Olson was also elected treasurer. Among the members were Charlotte Lowisa Ruth (Root) and her son John, Beata Krans and her son, John, J. Hallsen, and N. Hallbom.[27]

On March 16, 1873, J. Chaiser of Bishop Hill wrote a draft to a letter to G. E. Okerlind in Brooklyn, saying that he and Brother Hallsen had talked about publishing an Adventist paper. He said that he was too old to become its editor, but he would lend his German types for the setting. The paper would be small enough to be printed on their small press. It would be sent to his son in Chicago and enclosed with the newspaper *Nya Verlden.* Chaiser thought, according to this letter, that the circulars were necessary to encounter the evil preaching by the unfaithful and to inform people about the coming of Christ.[28]

Chaiser, a former Jansonist, had become a Baptist in Moline in 1860.[29] Upon returning to Bishop Hill in 1868, he became an Adventist. Chaiser's wish for an Adventist paper was fulfilled the following year, when *Svensk Advent Harold* was published at Battle Creek, Michigan, beginning in January, 1874. Its editor was C. A. Carlstedt.[30] Chaiser devoted himself to the promoting of the Adventist faith by translating and printing tracts largely at his own expense.[31] So-called religious tracts were published at Bishop Hill between 1868 and 1880 by *Bibliska Traktat Sallskapet.* The tracts were in the Swedish language and consisted of material translated from the English. One which was printed in 1868 explains the meaning of Adventism and its relation of the theology and prophecy of William Sheldon. It was translated by Johan Wellander. Another Bishop Hill resident, John Hallsen, also wrote various tracts in favor of the Adventist belief (Second Adventists, according to Stoneberg), and these were also printed at Bishop Hill.[32]

Jonas Olson continued to preach in the Old Colony Church until he was in his nineties. His assistant was Marten Johnson. Ads in *Galva Weekly News,* 1896, read as follows: "Colony Church Rev. Jonas Olson, Pastor; Regular Services Every Sabbath at 11 A.M." Jonas Olson died November 18, 1898, at the age of ninety-six. He was succeeded by Pastor Eric Naslund. The last pastor in the Colony church was Naslund's son, John Ericson. He was an excellent preacher according to an old resident in the village, who added that the former preachers, Jonas Olson and Marten Johnson, were very tiresome to listen to! Sunday School was also held. Some of the older people, whom I talked to in the early 1970's said that they went to Sunday School in the Old Colony Church so that they would get a coin for Christmas. They did not pay attention to what kind of congregation it was.

Rev. Jonas Olson

The former president of Broadview College and Theological Seminary, 1917-1928, Elder H. O. Olson, has informed me that there was no Seventh-day Adventist congregation in Bishop Hill in 1917, when he visited the village. However, he remembers that there were students at Broadview whose forefathers were from Bishop Hill. There is no record in the central archives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of an Adventist congregation in Bishop Hill.

To summarize the Church on the Hill, it appears that in the beginning the congregation was Second Adventist, but that a split occurred soon after organization, resulting in two factions. The one led by Hallsen, Chaiser and others remained Second-Adventist oriented, while the faction led by Jonas Olson, Eric Naslund and Marten Johnson reflected their own beliefs as derived from Jansonism, only moderated to suit those dissolutioned with that faith. The two groups worshipped together in the Old Colony Church, but the Second Adventist believers were more active in writing tracts, etc. Some of their children became Seventh-day Adventists.

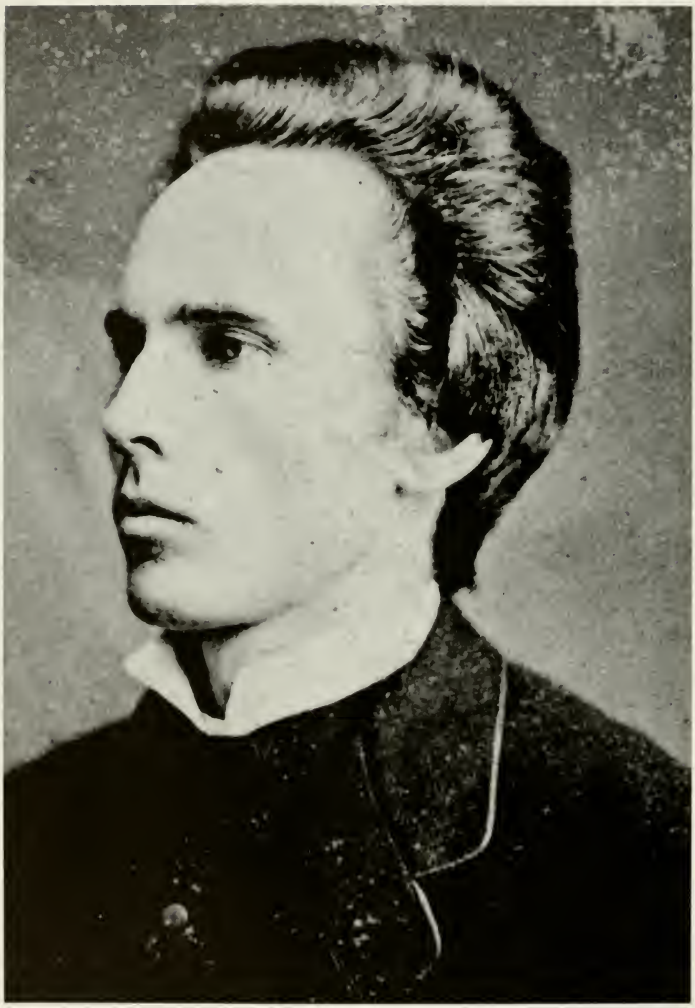
Although regular services were discontinued, funeral services were held at the Old Colony Church well into the twentieth century. When Beata Lindquist, an Adventist, born in Nora parish, Sweden in 1846, died at Bishop Hill on April 10, 1918, her funeral service was held there.

A Swedish Mission Covenant congregation was founded at Bishop Hill in 1877 by Reverend E. A. Skogsbergh.[33] The official records have not been found, but the Methodist pastor, N. O. Westergren, refers to the Mission Friends in his report to the First Quarterly Conference on October 15, 1880, in which he writes: "Although a so-called Mission Friend movement has arisen at Bishop Hill recently, this has not noticeably hurt us."[34] However, the Probationers' records show that some members left to join the Mission Friends in August, 1880.

Eric Norberg's wife was an eyewitness to the Mission Friend movement at Bishop Hill, according to an undated letter. Norberg wrote,

> My wife visited Bishop Hill for six weeks this past winter returning about five weeks ago. While she was at Bishop Hill, the Chicago evangelist, Skogsberg, was there saving many sinners, according to what I have been told. When Jonas Olsson opened up his church for Skogsberg's meetings, he seemed very friendly toward him and his work in the community, and took part in it himself. But now from what I have just learned, Olsson, as usual, has pulled out denying Skogsberg admittance to the church. Skogsberg still continues to visit Bishop Hill in spite of this, and when he is not there himself, he has one of his fellow preachers from Chicago staying at Bishop Hill to keep up, or augment, the revival or excitement which he has aroused. I have not personally seen or heard Skogsberg and I know nothing about his teachings.[35]

After that Skogsbergh had been banned from the Old Colony Church, the Mission Friends conducted services at Blomberg's Hall on the second floor of the Blacksmith Shop until a church was built around 1885. Andrew E. Wenstrand served the congregation as its pastor in the early 1880s.[36] He



Rev. Erik August Skogsbergh

was succeeded by Pastor A. G. Larsson, who visited Kewanee in 1883, while serving the congregation at Bishop Hill, and contributed to the founding of a Mission Covenant congregation there.[37] He represented Bishop Hill in Chicago in 1885, when the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant Synod was founded.[38]

A small church was built on the northeast corner of block 21 (The Steeple Building is located on the southwest corner of the same lot.) The church was built by Lars Lindbeck, who deeded the property to the trustees of the Swedish Mission Church on November 7, 1885.[39] The church was rented to the Methodists in 1900, while their church was being rebuilt.[40] The Mission Friend congregation still had a pastor at that time and services were held regularly. Several members of the Lindbeck family belonged. As fewer and fewer people attended, the need for it ceased and the building was sold and moved to Galva, where it was converted into a private residence. It was moved sometime between 1908 and 1910 and placed on Wiley's Addition, lot 1 and 2, block 8.

According to Johnson and Peterson, the Swedish families in Weller Township confessed their religion as follows in the late 1870s: "Frisint" 26 (see note of explanation); Methodist 20; Second Adventist 5; Jansonist 2; "Renlarlig" 2 (see note for explanation); Lutheran 2; "Ingersollit" 2; Baptist 1; no affiliation 3; "none listed" 3.[41]

Of the former trustees, two are listed as Methodists (Jacob Jacobson and Olof Stoneberg); one as "Frisint" (Swan Swanson); One as Second Adventist (Jonas Kronberg); No religion is listed for Jonas Olson who was still living, and none for the two trustees that had passed away (Olof Johnson and Jonas Erickson). In an addendum, the following affiliations were listed for Swedes living at Bishop Hill who apparently had been overlooked in the original survey: "Frisint" 1, Methodist 2, Second Adventist 1, Adventist 1, Lutheran 1.[42]

The Swedes in Galva Township were divided as follows in their religious views: "Frisint" 19; Methodist 7; Second Adventist 1; Jansonist 1; Lutheran 5; "Ingersollit" 1; no affiliation 3; "none listed" 1; "Fritankare" 2; Swedenborgian 2.[43] The conversion to the Covenant Faith of many adventists and others living in the Bishop Hill and Galva area in the early 1880s came too late to be included in the biographical information.[44] Eric Johnson did not list a religion for himself.

Thus it seems that the majority of the former colonists confessed to a "frisint" religious view meaning non-affiliated although they had the opportunity to join a wide range of denominations. Only one confessed to being a Jansonist. As we have seen Methodist, Lutheran, Adventist, and Mission Covenant congregations were founded at Bishop Hill. Some former Jansonists who moved to Moline, Illinois, became Baptists in 1860, while others who moved elsewhere in some cases joined Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches. But most of the former colonists remaining in Weller and Galva Townships seem to have preferred not to join established denominations. Johnson and Peterson concluded that most of

those who now live (before 1880) in this previously ultra-religious colony are unaffiliated with any congregations.[45]

More than 100 years later, the only church remaining in Bishop Hill is the Methodist Church. However, many of the villagers are still unaffiliated with any organized church. A church man in Chicago had the view that sectarianism generally is good for the awakening of one generation, but that it often turns the next generation off and away from any organized religion. In the case of Bishop Hill, he seems to be right.

NOTES

[1]Gary Schwartz, *Sect Ideologies and Social Status* (Chicago, 1970), pp. 38, 72.

[2]In 1880, 330 persons lived in the village, according to the Federal Census.

[3]*Portraits and Biographical Album of Henry County, Illinois* (Chicago, 1885), p. 719. See also L. Kiner, ed., *History of Henry County, Illinois* (Chicago, 1910), II. p. 393.

[4]Earlier it had been required that they had a guardian, as most of them could not read or write.

[5]*Missionsforbundets Minneskrift, 1885-1910* (Minneapolis, 1910), p. 49.

[6]Eric U. Norberg was born June 22, 1813, in Ullarva, Vastergotland, and emigrated in 1842. For two years he remained west of Milwaukee, WI, before going to Michigan. He came to Bishop Hill in 1848 and stayed there until 1850 when he appeared in Andover before moving on to Minnesota in 1851. Later he returned to Illinois. In the late 1870s he lived in Toulon, IL, where he farmed 240 acres. He was one of the complainants in the Bishop Hill Colony Case.

[7]G. Everet Arden, *Augustana Heritage* (Rock Island, 1963), p. 181.

[8]O. N. Nelson, ed., History of the Scandinavians and Successful Scandinavians in the United States (Minneapolis, 1900), p. 204.

[9]Victor Witting, Minnen Fran Mitt Lif (Sec. ed. Worcester, MA, 190'4), p. 178.

[10]Ibid., pp. 208-209.

[11]Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry,* Washington, D.C., n.d., p. 663.

[12]Information courtesy of Elder H. O. Olson, Glendale, CA.

[13]*Svenska Sjundedags Adventisternas Historia*, p. 72.

[14]Ibid., p. 193.

[15]First Swedish Methodist Membership Book, Bishop Hill, IL.

[16]*Messiah Lutheran Church Centennial History,* 1869-1969, Galva, IL, p. 5. (Membership book for the Swedish-Lutheran Congregation at Bishop Hill.)

[17]"Kyrko Bok for Svensk-Lutherska Forsamlingen i Bishop Hill, Henry Co. Illinois US 1868," in possession of the Lutheran Church in Altona, IL.

[18]*Messiah Lutheran Church Centennial History,* and manuscript for the 70th anniversary.

[19]"Church-Record for Svenska-Evangeliska Lutherska Forsamlingen i Andover, Henry County," Book No. 3, pp. 50, 42.

[20]Eric Johnson and C. F. Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois* (Chicago, IL, 1880), pp. 53.

[21]Letter from A. Larsson to Ekblom, dated Chicago June 10, 1875. *Nar Svensk-Amerika Grundades,* ed. Albin Widen (Boras, Sweden, n.d.), pp. 127-28.

[22]Johnson and Peterson, p. 52.

[23]Ibid, p. 52.

[24]Ibid, pp. 52-53.

[25]Letter from Eric U. Norberg to A. Larsson, n.d. *Nar Svensk-Amerika Grundades,* 54.

[26]Michael Mikkelsen, *The Bishop Hill Colony, A Religious Communistic Settlement in Henry County, Illinois* (Baltimore, Md., 1891); reprinted in Theodore Anderson's *A History of Bishop Hill 100 Years - 1846-1946* (Chicago, 1946), p. 142.

[27]"Church on the Hill" membership book. Emmelyne A. Hedstrom Collection. The Bishop Hill Papers and Post Colony Papers. Microfilm held by the Swedish-American Historical Society, Chicago.

[28]Draft to letter. A. Chaiser was one of the owners and editors of *Nya Verlden.* See microfilm, note 27.

[29]L. Kiner, ed., *History of Henry County, Illinois,* p. 419.

[30]*Svenska Sjundedags Adventisternas Historia,* p. 161.

[31]Kiner, p. 419.

[32]Note at Bishop Hill Heritage Assn. Archives. Bishop Hill. See also microfilm, note 27.

[33]*Missionaren,* Chicago, July 15, 1903.

[34]"First Quarterly Conference." Church Records for First Swedish Methodist Church, Bishop Hill.

[35]Letter from Eric U. Norberg to A. Larsson, n.d. *Nar Svensk-Amerika Grundades,* p. 53.

[36]*Missionaren,* July 15, 1903.

[37]*Svenska Missionsvannernas i Amerika Historia* (The History of the Swedish Mission Friends). (Minneapolis, 1906), p. 424.

[38]*Missionsforbundets forsta femarsperiod,* "Protokoll hallet vid foreningsmotet i Chicago den 18-26 februari 1885" (The Mission Society's First Five-Year Period. Minutes of Meeting held in Chicago, February 18-26, 1885), p. 9.

[39]Filed Jan 18, 1886, Vol 170 p. 9 Henry County Court House, Cambridge, IL.

[40]*Church Messenger*, Marceline, MO, 1951.

[41]Johnson and Peterson, pp. 305-12. The authors identified "Frisint" as someone who has no specific theological views and does not belong to any church denomination. (p. 54). They did not identify what was meant with "Renlarlig" (approx. true to teachings) "Ingersollit" no doubt refers to those who agreed with Robert Green Ingersoll (1833-1899) who attacked orthodox Christian beliefs for almost 30 years. He lectured on his creed of agnosticism. He wrote *The Gods, and Other Lectures* (1876), *Some Mistakes of Moses* (1879), and *Great Speeches* (1887).

[42]Ibid., p. 313. (Emanuel Swedenborg was born in Sweden in 1688. The first Swedenborgian church was established in London in 1787.)

[43]Ibid., pp. 314-21. "Fritankare" (Free-thinker).

[44]Ibid., p. 442.

[45]Ibid., p. 54.

THE PATTERSON FAMILY OF OQUAWKA

John Lee Allaman

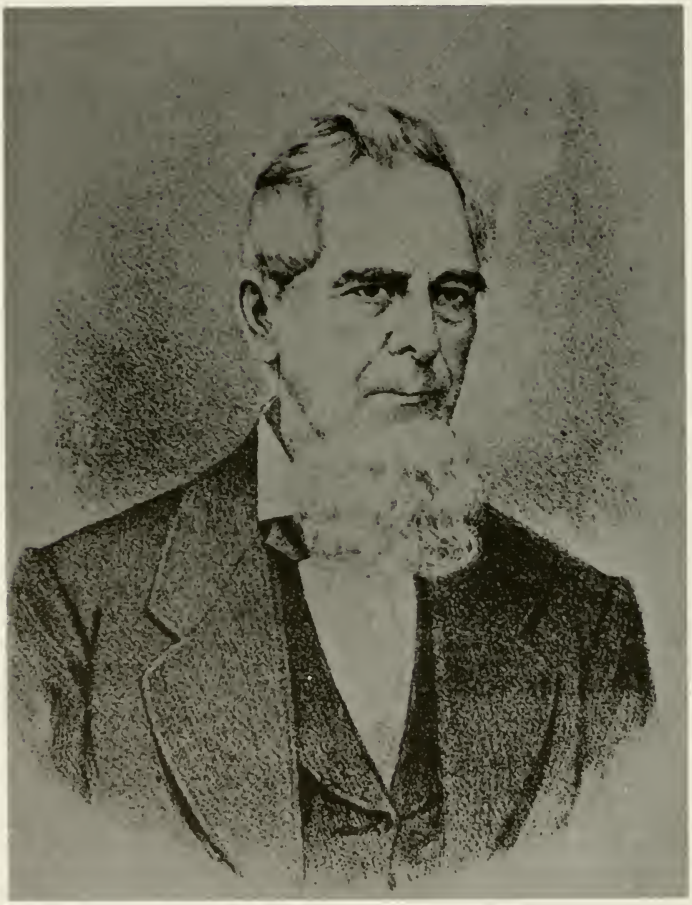
Oquawka today is a sleepy west central Illinois river town noted for its bars, river recreation, and an elephant grave. The last of these came unexpectedly in 1972, when a traveling circus elephant was struck by lightning and the carcass was buried in the village park. Soon a marker was erected over the grave and Oquawka had a tourist attraction.[1]

Historically, Oquawka, or Lower Yellow Banks, as it was called before 1836, was a river town that lost its prominence with the coming of the railroad. In the 1840s, Oquawka was the major shipping transit point for Henderson, Warren, and Knox counties. When a railroad line was built to Burlington, Iowa in 1855, Oquawka was bypassed and it never recovered the economic prominence it held in the 1840s.[2]

While Oquawka was eclipsed economically in the 1800s, a measure of literary merit was achieved with the creation of the weekly *Oquawka Spectator* in 1848 by members of the Patterson family. This newspaper which survived until 1908 deserves historical recognition by Illinois historians because an almost complete sixty-year run of the paper exists on microfilm. Knox College historian Hermann R. Muelder claimed the *Oquawka Spectator* was "one of the best pioneer periodicals of the Military Tract."[3]

What makes the *Oquawka Spectator* unique is the literary interests of the editors and publishers of the paper, John B. Patterson, Edwin H. N. Patterson, and Harry N. Patterson. Before 1868, when the *Spectator* began to use ready printed insides from Chicago, the paper was entirely printed by the Pattersons. The Pattersons were early proponents of local history. They published reminiscences and descriptions of early settlement in Illinois and Warren and Henderson Counties. The Pattersons reprinted many more stories and poems by authors like Edgar Allan Poe, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Ned Buntline, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. They conceived their newspaper to be not only a chronicler of events in Oquawka but also as a literary cultural magazine.[4]

The *Oquawka Spectator* contains lengthy travel narratives of Henderson County residents leaving in the 1850s and 1860s for California, Colorado, and Minnesota. Another important column in the *Spectator* was Mary B.



J. B. Patterson

Davis' descriptions of Chicago. Mrs. Davis was an old friend of the Pattersons. Davis was an early social worker and police matron in Chicago in the 1850s. Her letters and contributions to the *Spectator* contain much raw material on the seamier life of Chicago in the 1850s for the social historian or historical sociologist to interpret. Mrs. Davis described Chicago social problems like alcoholism, prostitution, and female transvestism.[5]

While the Pattersons' newspaper is a great source of nineteenth-century local history, they also had other publishing interests besides the newspapers. All three of the Pattersons during their lifetimes published at least one book worthy of historical notice. The works were in the fields of history, literature, and botany.

John B. Patterson (January 11, 1806-April 15, 1890), the founder of the *Spectator* was born in Romney, Hampshire County, Virginia. His father, Thomas Patterson, was an Irish born school teacher. At the age of eighteen, he entered a printing office to learn the trade. In 1826, he went to work for a year at the *Winchester Virginia Republican* published by Samuel Davis. In April 1828, Patterson established the *Leesburg Observer.* This paper soon folded. Patterson then went to Washington, D.C. where he established the *American Argus* in May 1829. This paper also failed.[6]

After the two newspaper failures, Patterson decided to head west to seek his fortune. In March of 1832, he headed for Illinois. He arrived at Rock Island, Illinois in April 1832 and stayed with the family of George Davenport, the Indian Trader. Patterson was a relative of the Davenport family. Dr. Addison K. Philleo, publisher of the *Galena Galenian* was visiting Fort Armstrong about April 12, 1832 and met Patterson. Philleo wanted to be involved in the Black Hawk War so he asked Patterson to work on his newspaper and publish it while he was out in the field fighting Black Hawk.[7]

Patterson went to Galena and was even mustered into Captain Milton M. Maugh's Twenty-seventh Regiment Illinois Militia as a private on May 26, 1832. He evidently saw no action because he was detailed to be the regimental printer and help publish the *Galenian.* Patterson stayed in Galena until October 1832 when he returned to Rock Island. He became a clerk for George Davenport and served as a justice of the peace.[8]

While at Rock Island, Patterson obtained a once in a lifetime opportunity. He became acquainted with Black Hawk in 1833 after the war chief had been released from custody and returned to Iowa. Black Hawk wanted to publish his autobiography and he turned to his interpreter friend, Antoine LeClair, for help. LeClair did not feel he could do a proper job of writing so he asked twenty-seven year old Patterson to assist him. LeClair translated Black Hawk's recollections and Patterson put them down on paper. In October 1833, the autobiography was ready and it was sent to a publisher in Cincinnati, Ohio. Patterson claimed that he had "written" the "work according to the dictation of Black Hawk, through the United States' Interpreter, at the Sac and Fox Agency of Rock Island."[9]

In February 1834, Patterson was in Boston promoting the publication of another edition of the autobiography. He hoped it would be a money making proposition. He claimed, "As yet, I have made nothing out of Black Hawk." Patterson had a steel engraving of Black Hawk made as a frontispiece for the new book edition that cost $50.00. He actively advertised the autobiography. Patterson wrote, "I am now dramatizing Black Hawk. That is, I am writing an Indian Tragedy which will be performed in this city. I have a full dress with me, and will personify an Indian character in the piece myself." Patterson met with some success because two editions of the autobiography were published in 1834 in Boston along with one edition in Philadelphia and also one in New York.[10]

Arnold Krupat in his study of Indian autobiographies claimed Patterson created the first Indian autobiography and that it became a model for later autobiographies of Geronimo, Yellow Wolf, and Black Elk. Krupat believed that Black Hawk's autobiography was the only true Indian autobiography created in nineteenth-century America.[11]

The Black Hawk autobiography remained important to Patterson. When Thomas Ford's *History of Illinois* was published claiming the autobiography a hoax and "a catch-penny publication," Patterson editorialized in the *Oquawka Spectator* that the book was "a literal translation of Black Hawk's own statements." Patterson's editorial gained more weight when it was reprinted by Lyman Draper in the 1868 volume of the *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.* In 1882, almost fifty years after the first autobiography was published, Patterson issued a second edition of the autobiography that included his own short history of the Black Hawk War. Unfortunately, Patterson altered portions of the text trying to make it sound more literary and so put himself at the mercy of later professional historians' criticisms for having altered the original work. Donald Jackson, in his edition of the Black Hawk autobiography, claimed that "If we are to evaluate Black Hawk's story properly, we must disregard the 1882 edition and stick with the 1833 edition, which, despite the intrusive hands of interpreter and editor is basically a tale told by an Indian from an Indian point of view."[12]

After meeting with success in his publishing venture, John B. Patterson returned to Illinois, and by the summer of 1834 he came to Lower Yellow Banks. Here he made arrangements with Stephen S. Phelps to trade with the Indians in Iowa during the coming winter. Patterson then went down river to Keokuk, Iowa and was detained a few weeks where he opened the first school in Keokuk. He witnessed the naming of the town of Keokuk in a bar in September 1834. Soon he returned to Lower Yellow Banks and loaded up a boat and went up to the Forks of Skunk River in Iowa, where he remained until April 1835 trading with the Indians. Patterson returned to Lower Yellow Banks in 1835 and was elected justice of the peace. In July 1836, Lower Yellow Banks was renamed Oquawka, and Patterson had evidently decided to put down roots. He had a house built, started a general retail store, and brought his wife, Mahala Jane Patterson, and son,

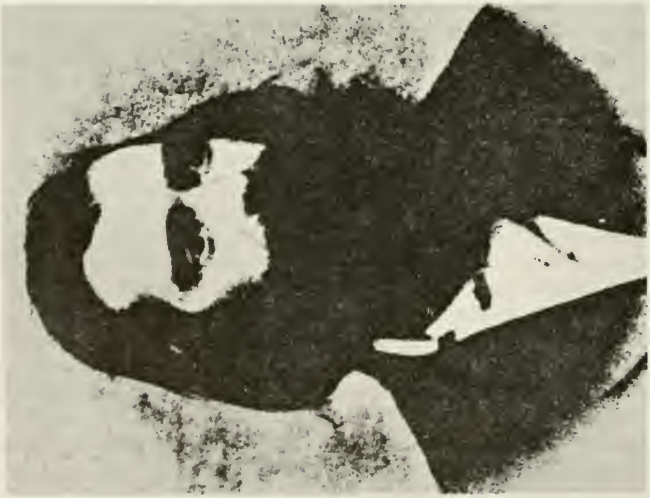
Edwin H. N., westward to reside in Oquawka. In 1838, Patterson became Postmaster of Oquawka and served several times between 1838 and 1860. He was appointed brigade inspector and commissioned a Colonel in the Illinois Militia. For the rest of his life he was called Colonel Patterson. He tried to be elected as a delegate to the 1847 Illinois State Constitutional Convention but was defeated.[13]

In February 1848, Patterson started to issue the *Oquawka Spectator* which was printed on a Washington hand press that was previously owned by the *Burlington Gazette*. He published the paper with the help of his son or grandson until he retired in October 1884. He was a supporter of the Democratic Party so he changed the editorial policy of the *Spectator* in January 1864 from independent to the Democratic Party. Patterson claimed the change was made because the editors believed the United States government duties should be to "preserve the Union and to maintain the integrity of the Constitution of our country." He opposed prolonging the Civil War "unnecessarily" if a seceding state was willing to surrender and return to the union. Before 1864, Patterson had been fairly impartial in the reporting of Civil War battles. Albert Bodenhamer in his analysis of Civil War reporting by four west-central Illinois newspapers claimed that often the *Oquawka Spectator* did the best job of the four newspapers studied: The *Spectator* continued to be a supporter of the Democratic Party after the war was over. Patterson died at Oquawka on April 15, 1890 at the age of eighty-four and was buried in the town cemetery.[14]

Patterson as a writer has been somewhat rehabilitated recently by literary historians. Arnold Krupat acknowledged his formation of the concept of Indian autobiography, and John Hallwas in his recent collection of nineteenth-century Illinois literature used selections from Patterson's 1882 edition of the autobiography because the 1882 edition was "more readable."[15] Patterson's abilities as a historian should be measured alongside the literary gentlemen historians of the nineteenth-century rather than the twentieth-century professional historians. Patterson was telling an exciting tale of Indian life, and he wanted Black Hawk to be a statuesque hero.

Edwin H. N. Patterson (January 27, 1828-April 21, 1880)[16] was born at Winchester, Virginia, the son of John B. and Mahala Jane Patterson. He came to Illinois at the age of eight and grew up in the riverfown of Oquawka. In 1844, at the age of sixteen, Edwin Patterson was already interested in printing. A letter has survived from Samuel Davis to Patterson describing an order of labels Patterson was having made up. During 1845 and 1846, Patterson attended Jubilee College near Peoria. He was enrolled in the preparatory school of the college. His classes for 1846 included Latin and Greek; Orthography, Geography, and English Grammar; Arithmetic and Algebra. Patterson was evidently a blossoming man of letters because he was keeping a journal of his travels from Oquawka to Jubilee College in 1846. In the fall of 1846, he entered Knox College at

Harry N. Patterson



Edwin H. N. Patterson

Galesburg as a freshman student. His course of instruction in 1846 and 1847 was steeped in classical literature. He read Xenophon, Cicero, and Euclid, and studied algebra and rhetoric. Patterson finished one year at Knox and decided not to return.[17]

In February 1849, he officially joined his father in publishing the *Oquawka Spectator.*[18] Edwin became busily engaged in printing the weekly paper, but he also had time to write occasional literary contributions to the *Spectator.*

The year of 1849 was probably the single most important year in Patterson's life. Patterson had been a devotee of the writings of Edgar Allan Poe. In December 1848, he wrote Poe suggesting the establishment of a western literary magazine. Poe sent the following letter in response:

New-York: April 1849.

Dear Sir,

No doubt you will be surprised to learn that your letter, dated Dec. 18, has only this moment reached me. I live at the village of Fordham, about 14 miles from New-York, on the Harlam Rail-Road—but as there is no Post-Office at the place, I date always from New-York, and get all my letters from the city Post-Office. When, by accident or misapprehension, letters are especially directed to me at Fordham, the clerks—some of them who do not know my arrangements—forward them to West-Farms, the nearest Post-Office town, and one which I rarely visit. Thus it happened with **your** letter—on account of the request which you made Mr. Putnam, I presume, "to forward it to my residence." I have thought it proper to make you this explanation, lest you may have been all this time fancying me discourteous in not replying to your very flattering proposition.

I deeply regret that I did not sooner receive it; and had it reached me in due season, I would have agreed to it unhesitatingly. In assuming "originality" as the "keystone of success" in such enterprises, you are right; and not only right, but, in yourself, almost "original"—for there are none of our publishers who have the wit to perceive this vital truth. What the public seek in a Magazine is **what they cannot elsewhere procure.**

Should you not have changed your mind on the subject, I should be pleased to hear from you again. I do not think—(in fact I am perfectly sure of the contrary)—that a Magazine could succeed, to any great extent, under the precise form, title, and general plan which (no doubt hurriedly) you have suggested; but your idea of the duplicate publication, East & West, strikes me forcibly.

Experience, not less than the most mature reflection on the topic, assures me that no **cheap** Magazine can ever again prosper in America. We must aim high—address the intellect—the higher classes—of the country (with reference, also, to a certain amount of foreign circulation) and put the work at $5:—giving about 112 pp. (or perhaps 128) with occasional wood-engravings in the first style of art, but only in obvious illustration of the text. Such a Mag. would begin to pay after 1000 subscribers; and with 5000 would be a fortune worth talking about:—but there is no earthly reason why, under proper management, and with energy and talent, the work might not be made to circulate, at the end of a few years—(say 5) 20,000 copies—in which case it

would give a clear income of 70 or 80,000 dollars—even if conducted in the most expensive manner, paying the highest European prices for contributions & designs. I need not add that such a Mag. would exercise a literary and other influence never yet exercised in America.—I presume you know that during the second year of its existence, the "S. L. Messenger" rose from less than 1000 to 5000 subs., and that "Graham," in 18 months after my joining it, went up from 5000 to 52,000. I do not imagine that a $5 Mag. could ever be forced into so great a circulation as this latter; but, under certain circumstances, I would answer for 20,000. The whole income from Graham's 52,000 never went beyond 15,000$:—the proportional expenses of the $3 Mags. being so very much greater than those of the $5 ones.

My plan, in getting up such a work as I propose, would be to take a tour through the principal States—especially West & South—visiting the small towns more particularly than the large ones—lecturing as I went, to pay expenses—and staying sufficiently long in each place to interest my personal friends (old College & West Point acquaintances scattered all over the land) in the success of the enterprise. By these means, I would guarantee, in 3 months (or 4) to get 1,000 subs. in advance, with their signatures—nearly all pledged to pay on the issue of the first number. Under such circumstances, success would be certain. I have now about 200 names pledged to support me whenever I venture on the undertaking—which perhaps you are aware I have long had in contemplation—only awaiting a **secure** opportunity.

If you will write me your views on the subject—as much in detail as possible—and if they accord in any degree with mine—I will endeavor to pay you a visit at Oquawka, or meet you at any place you suggest, where we can talk the matter over with deliberation. Please direct your reply simply to New-York City.

Very Respy.
Yr. Ob. St.
Edgar A. Poe.

E. H. N. Patterson, Esq.

Correspondence between the two men continued through the summer of 1849. They planned that the magazine would be published in either Oquawka or St. Louis. Their dreams were shattered when Poe died at Baltimore in October 1849.[19]

Patterson was so devoted to Poe's style of writing that he even created his own novel that was published in the *Oquawka Spectator* in serial fashion during the months of August and September 1849. The story entitled *Aztec Revelations* described in autobiographical format the exploits of a Spanish adventurer in Mexico in the 1500s. Patterson was hoping to capitalize on the popularity of the recent Mexican War as well as using the format of Poe's horror stories. The story begins in a sealed tomb-like room that reminds one of Poe's story "The Cask of Amontillado":

One day our conversation turned upon the Romance connected with the Conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards under Cortés, when my friend remarked that he had in his possession a copy of a rare and antique document, which had been preserved in his family for more than fifty years, it had originally been procured from a gentleman of high rank in the country, who gave the following singular history of the original manuscript: He related that his

> father, some forty years previous, had, in tearing down a very old building preparatory to erecting one of more modern style, discovered a moveable slab in the stone floor, which upon being removed disclosed a tunnel-shaped orifice leading down, as it was afterwards found, into a cell some eight feet square in the foundation of the building. In the progress of removing the foundation this cell was found to contain the skeleton of a man who had probably been confined here for some public offence or to gratify some private malice.

One interesting aspect of Patterson's story is his sympathetic treatment of the Aztec Indians who were displaced by the Spaniards. Patterson's admiration of the Aztecs is akin to his father's admiration of Black Hawk.[20]

After the novel appeared in the *Spectator,* it was decided by the Pattersons to print *Aztec Revelations* in a separate book form. The ninety-six page novel was published in Oquawka, Illinois. Edwin Patterson was very possibly the first published novelist residing in western Illinois. Illinois literary scholar John Hallwas has asserted that Patterson's work is "a poor piece of fiction," primarily because "the characters are not well depicted and the plot is exceedingly melodramatic." Patterson can possibly be forgiven somewhat for his inadequately written novel since he was only twenty-one years old in 1849. In any case, his *Aztec Revelations* is unique because of the very early publication date.[21]

Fortunately, after his first novel Patterson turned to travel journal writing. With the California Gold Rush occurring in 1849, Patterson was lured off to the west in search of adventure and fortune. In April 1850, Patterson set off from Oquawka in a wagon train with other gold seekers and headed west towards California. They followed the old Mormon Trail to Utah and then headed south to the gold fields. By January 1851, he had returned to Oquawka not having made a fortune but he had been practicing his travel writing. Throughout the years 1850 and 1851, Patterson had been keeping a diary of his adventures in the West and sending them home to Oquawka where they were published in the *Spectator.* His entire wagon trip to California, his sojourn in California, and his return to Oquawka are lovingly detailed in lengthy columns in the *Spectator.*[22]

A flavor of Patterson's travel writing style can be gleaned from the following diary entry for April 15, 1850 describing Kanesville, Iowa:

> *Monday, April* 15—The weather is still cold. Rode homewards, grain hunting without success, and crossed a ridge of knobs; met a great many Emigrant teams corn hunting. Kanesville has a population of about 600; contains a number of stores, shops, mechanics, &c. Goods are reasonably low, but grain—as Webster says—'get out.' The inhabitants are nearly all Mormons and are merely sojourners here—the 'manifest destiny' of all being to reach the 'Valley,' [Great Salt Lake] the ultimatum of their hopes; they appear to be an honest and industrious set of people, and certainly manage to make business ring in this little town. Corn—I hate to retreat to this theme so often—is now worth $1.25 *only;* Pike says that his purse has the sweeney, and I presume there are very few in the company but what might say the same *with truth.*

Edwin Patterson evidently liked travel writing. When he traveled up the Mississippi River to Minneapolis in August 1852, he contributed lengthy columns to the *Spectator* describing the Minnesota frontier. In March 1859, the lure of gold again drew him westward, this time to Colorado. The trip westward was again given a prominent spot in the columns of the *Oquawka Spectator.* Patterson's 1859 trip to Colorado was published in 1942 in a collection of gold rush diaries to Colorado edited by western historian LeRoy R. Hafen. Hafen described his travel narrative by saying "The account of his journey of 1859 is long and detailed. In fact it is the fullest diary we have found of a trip to the mines of present Colorado. Being intended for publication in the *Oquawka Spectator,* it was filled with all the descriptions and observations that a newspaper reporter considered of interest to the home folks and the general public." The length of the diary in the Hafen edition was 132 pages.[23]

Patterson returned to Oquawka in late 1859. Then in April 1860 he again left for Colorado and stayed there until the fall of 1861. This trip was again reported in lengthy columns in the *Spectator.* When the Civil War erupted on the scene, Patterson was back in Oquawka and stayed there during the war publishing the *Spectator.* In October 1867, he again visited Colorado this time by train describing his journey westward with his observations which occupied several editions of the *Spectator.*[24]

Patterson stayed for a short while in Colorado and then returned to Oquawka. He also made a train trip to Nebraska in May 1871 which also appeared in the columns of the *Spectator.* His travel narratives ceased in July 1873. He made one final trip to Colorado and took up permanent residence in Georgetown, Colorado where he became publisher of the *Georgetown Miner.* Patterson finally severed his links with the *Oquawka Spectator.* He did not live very long in Colorado for on April 21, 1880 he died at Denver and was buried at Georgetown. In 1928, a mountain near Georgetown was renamed Mount Sniktau in honor of Edwin Patterson. Sniktau was a name often used by Patterson in his literary writings.[25]

While Patterson's correspondence with Edgar Allan Poe justifies recognition for its audacity, his travel writing may constitute a larger body of usable historical material. While his trips to California and the first two to Colorado are the most important because of their length and detail, Patterson should be recognized as a writer of seven travel narratives (to California, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Colorado) between 1850 and 1873.

Harry N. Patterson (February 15, 1853-May 23, 1919) was born in Oquawka, the son of Edwin H. N. and Laura Patterson. His mother died when he was fourteen. He learned the art of newspaper publishing by helping his father and grandfather with the *Oquawka Spectator.* Patterson developed early on an interest in Botany. His father probably taught him enough Latin to be comfortable with the scientific designations of many plants. In 1874, young Patterson published a short eighteen page pamphlet at Oquawka entitled *A List of Plants Collected in the Vicinity of Oquawka, Henderson County, Ills.* In 1875 and 1876, he visited his father in

Colorado and spent time collecting plants there.[28]

In March 1876, Patterson published at Oquawka his *Catalogue of the Phaenogamous and Vascular Cryptogamous Plants of Illinois, Native and Introduced.* Patterson's contribution included only his research in Henderson County. The rest of the catalogue was made up of lists and notes from sixteen other Illinois botanists. This work was the second earliest published flora of Illinois plants.[27]

Patterson's catalogue has stood up well through the years. In 1945, M. L. Fernald cited it in his essay on the flora of Illinois. In 1955, G. Neville Jones and George D. Fuller also cited it in their *Vascular Plants of Illinois.* Amazingly, Patterson was only twenty-three years old when he made his contribution to Illinois botany. Another work which Patterson published in 1887 was a 151-page *Check-list of North American Plants, Including Mexican Species Which Approach the U.S. Boundary.*[28]

In October 1884, Patterson took over control of the *Oquawka Spectator* from his grandfather John B. Patterson. Harry was evidently a strong prohibitionist because in June 1886 he changed the political stance of the *Spectator* from the Democratic Party to the Prohibitionist Party. Patterson claimed "that the prohibition by law of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage is of more importance than any other question now agitated in politics, and satisfied that the Democratic Party (at least in the North) will do nothing for this principle, [the publisher] feels it to be his duty, as a professing Christian and temperance man, to withdraw from that party and hereafter support prohibitionists for office. We believe that men who favor this question can as safely be trusted with all public interests as any other class." In 1904, Patterson listed his wife Florence as joint editor publisher of the *Spectator.*[29]

In 1895, Clement W. Andrews of the John Crerar Library in Chicago asked Patterson to submit a bid for printing the catalogue cards for the library. Patterson's bid was accepted, and until his death in 1919 Patterson was the printer for the John Crerar Library.[30]

In 1900, Patterson sold his botanical collection to the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. From then on he limited his botanical activities to publishing the library catalogue cards. By 1908, the printing of the cards was taking so much time that he was forced to discontinue publishing the *Oquawka Spectator* after a sixty year run. Patterson died on May 23, 1919 in Burlington, Iowa at the age of sixty-six and was buried in the Oquawka Cemetery.[31]

Patterson was a competent botanist for at one time in his life he was offered the position of an assistant to the Chief of the Division of Botany of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. His work as an early botanist in Colorado is memorialized in the five native Colorado plants that are named after him. One biographer, biologist Alice L. Kibbe, claimed Patterson was very qualified for "printing taxonomic labels for herbarium specimens." She also wrote that Patterson was "a professional plant collector and distributor and his skill along this line made the specimens

collected and pressed by him stand almost in a class by themselves, because of their perfection." Patterson kept an extensive botanical correspondence during his lifetime and this was published by Alice Kibbe in 1953. Unfortunately, the correspondence only included letters sent to Patterson.[32]

As a footnote to the story of the Pattersons, one must recognize Florence Patterson's contributions after the death of Harry. In 1920, she sold the printing plant type and presses to the John Crerar Library. She then became the manager of the John Crerar Library Printing Office that continued to be located in Oquawka until the 1940s. Florence Patterson retired in 1942 only a few years before the printing plant ceased in Oquawka. In 1945, it was recorded that the printing plant in Oquawka had published approximately three million index cards as well as call slips, the John Crerar Library Quarterly, and other library pamphlets.

The old Washington Press which printed sixty years of the *Oquawka Spectator*, Harry Patterson's botanical works, and his father Edwin's novel was sent to Chicago in 1938 as a historical relic. In 1945, it was on exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry.[33]

John B., Edwin H. N., and Harry N. Patterson each made at least one literary contribution to nineteenth-century America. John B. Patterson's Black Hawk autobiography is a classic primary account of Indian-White relations. Edwin H. N. Patterson's travel accounts of the California and Colorado Gold Rushes are important primary descriptions of two migrations westward. Harry N. Patterson's botanical writings documented and recorded the flora and fauna of a raw unspoiled environment. Because of the Pattersons, Oquawka may have some claim to being a center of literary endeavor in the 1800s in western Illinois.

NOTES

[1]Jerry Klein, *Played in Peoria* (Peoria, Illinois: The Kickapoo Press, 1980), pp. 79-81.

[2]George A. Boeck, "A Decade of Transportation Fever in Burlington, Iowa, 1845-1855," *Iowa Journal of History* 56 (1958), 129-152. For histories of Oquawka see James W. Gordon, "Reminiscences of Yellow Banks," *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society for the Year 1915* (1916), 54-62; Matthew H. Jamison, *Recollections of Pioneer and Army Life* (Kansas City: Hudson Press, 1911); Virginia Mae Hughes, "The Mississippi River Trade and Its Influence Upon the River Town of Oquawka," (Honors paper, Knox College, 1941); Carl Anton Wagner, "Oquawka: A Typical Upper Mississippi River Port 1883-1890," (M. A. thesis, Univ. of Illinois, 1942); and Robert Reeder, Eileen Nolan, and Barbara Lumbeck, comps., *History of Oquawka: Oquawka Sesquicentennial 1836-1986* (Oquawka: n.p., 1986).

[3]Herman R. Muelder, *Fighters for Freedom: The History of Anti-Slavery Activities of Men and Women Associated With Knox College* (New York: Columbia Univ.

Press, 1959), p. 188. Other historical writings besides the ones listed above that have used the *Oquawka Spectator* as a primary source include Earnest Elmo Calkins, *They Broke the Prairie: Being Some Account of the Settlement of the Upper Mississippi Valley by Religious and Educational Pioneers Told in Terms, of One City, Galesburg, and of One College, Knox* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937; reprint ed., Galesburg, Ill.: The Knox College Press, 1962); Albert Cloyd Bodenhamer, "Civil War Episodes and Illinois Newspapers," (M. A. thesis, Western Illinois Univ., 1982); Patrick Bates Nolan, "Vigilantes on the Middle Border: A Study of Self-Appointed Law Enforcement in the States of the Upper Mississippi from 1840 to 1880," (Ph.D. dissertation, Univ. of Minnesota, 1971); Maurine D. McElroy, "Poe's Last Partner, E. H. N. Patterson of Oquawka, Illinois," *Papers on Language and Literature* 7 (1971), 252-71; Keith A. Sculle, "Jacob Allaman, Covered Bridge Builder: A Case Study," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 76 (1983), 139-149; John Lee Allaman, "The Crime, Trial, and Execution of William W. Lee of East Burlington, Illinois," *Western Illinois Regional Studies* 6 (1983) 49-66; and John Lee Allaman, "Greenbush Vigilantes: An Organizational Document," *Western Illinois Regional Studies* 10 (1987), 32-41.

[4]*Oquawka Spectator,* 19 November 1868; John Lee Allaman, " 'Incidents in the Life of an Old Pioneer': The Memoir of Fields Jarvis," *Western Illinois Regional Studies* 9 (1986), 5-18; A. Sucker, "Wisconsin Lead Region," *Oquawka Spectator,* 28 Febrary 1849, p. 1; S. Hutchinson, "The Deep Snow of 1831," *Oquawka Spectator,* 6 March 1855, p. 2; G. McD., "A Reminiscence of the Revolution," *Oquawka Spectator,* 16 October 1857, p. 2; "Pioneer History," *Oquawka Spectator,* 26 February 1858, p. 2; "Chronicles of Warren County," *Oquawka Spectator,* 2, 9 March 1865, p. 1; Edgar A. Poe, "For Annie," *Oquawka Spectator,* 16 May 1849, p. 1; Edgar A. Poe, "The Raven," *Oquawka Spectator,* 12 September 1849, p. 1; Edgar A. Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher," *Oquawka Spectator,* 23, 30 August 1848, p. 1; Harriet Beecher Stowe, "The Coral Ring," *Oquawka Spectator,* 28 June 1848, p. 1; Ned Buntline, "A Sight at Louis Phillippe," *Oquawka Spectator,* 18 October 1848, p. 1; and Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Golden Touch," *Oquawka Spectator,* 15 September 1852, p. 1.

[5]Muelder, pp. 174, 188; M. B. Davis, "The Dark Lantern: or Scenes and Sights in the Garden City., Founded Upon Actual Occurrences," *Oquawka Spectator,* 25 December 1857, 1-19 February 1858, p. 1; M. B. D., "Our Chicago Correspondence," *Oquawka Spectator,* 7 May 1858, p. 2; M. B. Davis, "A Few Words in My Own Defence," *Oquawka Spectator,* 12 February 1858, p. 2; and M. B. D., "Our Chicago Correspondence," *Oquawka Spectator,* 12 March 1858, p. 2.

[6]E. M. Sanchez-Saavedra, *A Description of the Country: Virginią's Cartographers and Their Maps 1607-1881* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1975), map 7. Biographies of John B. Patterson include "The Founder of the Spectator Dead," *Oquawka Spectator,* 16 April 1890, p. 1; and *History of Henderson County . . .* (Chicago: H. H. Hill and Company, Publishers, 1882; reprint ed., Aledo, Illinois: The Times Record Co., [1975, 1981]), pp. 104-106.

[7][Black Hawk], *Autobiography of Ma-Ka-Tai-Me-She-Kia-Kiak; or Black Hawk . . .* (Oquawka, Ill.: J. B. Patterson, 1882), p. 149.

[8]Ellen M. Whitney, comp. and ed., *The Black Hawk War 1831-1832, Illinois State Historical Library Collections,* vol. xxxv (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1970), pp. 514, 517; and Article of Agreement Between George Davenport and

Stephen Phelps & Co., July 31, 1833, Chouteau Maffitt Manuscript Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.

[9]Donald Jackson, ed., *Black Hawk: An Autobiography* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1964), pp. 26-27, 38-39.

[10]Charles E. Snyder, "Antoine LeClaire, the First Proprietor of Davenport," *Annals of Iowa,* 3rd Series, 23 (1941), 97; and Arnold Krupat, *For Those Who Come After: A Study of Native American Autobiography* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985), pp. 53, 143.

[11]Krupat, pp. 34, 53.

[12]Thomas Ford, *A History of Illinois, From Its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847* . . . (Chicago: S. C. Griggs & Co., 1854; reprint ed., Ann Arbor, Michigan: Univ. Microfilms, 1968), p. 110; J. B. Patterson, "Gov. Ford's History: An Error of the Historian Corrected," *Oquawka Spectator,* 23 January 1855, p. 2; J. B. Patterson, "Black Hawk's Autobiography Vindicated," *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin,* vol. v, (1868), 300-304; and Jackson, p. 30.

[13]"How Keokuk Was Named," *Oquawka Spectator,* 19 June 1871, p. 1; *History of Henderson County* . . . , pp. 68, 69; and Theodore Calvin Pease, ed., *Illinois Election Returns 1818-1848, Illinois State Historical Library Collections,* vol. xviii (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1923), p. 448.

[14]"First Words," *Oquawka Spectator,* 7 January 1864, p. 2; Bodenhamer, pp. 54, 69, 84; and *Oquawka Spectator,* 30 October 1884, p. 1.

[15]John E. Hallwas, ed., *Illinois Literature: The Nineteenth Century* (Macomb, Illinois: Illinois Heritage Press, 1986), p. 26.

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CIRCULATION AND SURVIVAL: *McCLURE'S MAGAZINE* AND THE STRANGE DEATH OF MUCKRAKING JOURNALISM*

Harold S. Wilson

On the occasion of Knox College's semi-centennial, celebrated in the year of the Constitution's Centennial, a Galesburg newspaper evaluated the impact of Knox upon its times. Out of a thousand graduates came six college presidents, twenty college professors, forty physicians, eighty lawyers, one hundred ministers, and twenty-five journalists.[1] These journalists were especially effective in carrying the moral imperatives of Knox's founders to a larger national audience through the medium of the press. More than most elected officials they helped to shape a public agenda for governmental action and reform in the tremulous years of industrial unrest, periodic depression, and urban decline which followed the Civil War. In doing so they established a standard for reporting which has been rarely equalled by the American press.

Foremost among this happy band of self-appointed prophets was Sam McClure, colorful, a bona fide genius, and in the eyes of some an eccentric. McClure, fatherless at an early age, came to America in 1866. A decade later at age nineteen, through the recommendation of an uncle, McClure enrolled in the Knox preparatory school. Before he graduated in 1882 he found the woman he was to marry, edited the school newspaper, and made the friends who were to help him conquer the New York publishing world. Alumni such as Robert Mather, president of Westinghouse, the Bancroft brothers, successful academics, and Ernest Elmo Calkins, advertiser, rallied to his aid when needed. But central in McClure's emergence as the foremost American publisher were the Brady brothers, Albert, Oscar, and Curtis, from Davenport, and John S. Phillips,

*This was delivered as a paper during a symposium entitled "The Muckraking Tradition in American Journalism," held at Knox College on October 9, 1987, as part of the Knox College Sesquicentennial celebration.

Harriet Hurd, daughter of a Knox College professor, married McClure in 1883.

S. S. McClure in 1884, two years after he left Knox College.

Albert Brady, another Knox classmate, also helped to found the magazine and was the advertising manager.

John Phillips, a classmate at Knox, helped to found *McClure's Magazine*.

son of a Galesburg physician. McClure early brought Phillips to Boston when he established the *Wheelman* magazine in 1882, then to the McClure's newspaper syndicate in 1884, and finally to the *McClure's Magazine* in 1893. Of Phillips he wrote, "he was my closet friend and advisor, able, loyal, wise . . . we worked together like the blades of a pair of shears."[2]

In 1886 McClure launched a syndicate to supply newspapers with literary material and thereby did much to introduce Americans to the works of Rudyard Kipling, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Robert Louis Stevenson. With a safe full of manuscripts, he launched *McClure's Magazine* in 1893, pricing it like *Munsey's* first at fifteen cents, then ten cents a copy. Much of this publishing revolution was visual: high speed Hoe presses turned out photo-engravings and color supplements for a new, urbane, literate public thirsty for information and entertainment. The world was astir: war in Cuba and South Africa, wireless telegraphy and airplanes, the collapse of the Czar's empire, and problems with monopolies and political corruption at home. And advertisers, hungry for a national market, were awash with funds.

McClure brought with him into this publishing revolution a sense of detachment and decorum, a respect for factual appeals to the reader's reason that was truly remarkable. A publisher who was his own editor, like McClure, faced a special dilemma over whether to build circulation solely to boost advertising revenues or to define and write the news with some higher motive in mind. In sum he could either work for his readers or his pocket book. Adolph Ochs, of the New York *Times*, argued publishers should operate solely on advertising revenues and pocket other incomes as profits.[3] Some of McClure's contemporaries, Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, made large fortunes by the sensational exploitation of sex, scandal, and mayhem to the glee of the newest and poorest arrivals in the nation's cities. McClure would have none of this. He made his magazine a forum for ideas about science, society, and government. After the appearance of *McClure's*, William James of Harvard wrote that the leadership of American thought was "passing away from the Universities to the ten cent magazines."[4] He might have added that the Fourth Estate was also assuming a political role which was not codified by any article in the Constitution.

McClure's was established with the most unlikely nonfiction. A series on Napoleon boosted circulation by sixty-five thousand in November, 1894.[5] McClure felt that a Knox graduate had something special to say about Lincoln, and for years Ida Tarbell collected copies of manuscripts, oral testimony and government documents preparatory to her memorial study. The series doubled the magazine's circulation, which remained at about three hundred and fifty thousand for almost a decade.[6]

With more advertising and a larger circulation than any other magazine in the United States, McClure was able to hire the best reportorial talent available. Among fictional writings which glittered with the efforts of

Hamlin Garland, O. Henry, Stephen Crane, and Booth Tarkington lay the solid factual stuff about the modern world. McClure built an impressive staff. He hired Lincoln Steffens, Ray Stannard Baker, Willa Cather, Ida Tarbell, and William Allen White, among others. Even John Finley, the youthful president of Knox, worked at *McClures's* before going on to Princeton and the editorship of the New York *Times*. This ingenious staff, under McClure's guidance, invented the new journalism called muckraking. McClure paid them a mint — five to seven thousand dollars a year — and expected them to dig up the facts and arrange them in readable fashion. Phillips spent two years in graduate study at the University of Berlin, Steffens attended Berlin and the Sorbonne, and Tarbell studied at the Sorbonne. Mark Sullivan had a law degree from Harvard before joining the staff as an investigator. The staff meetings were seminars. Despite the luminaries on the staff, there is little doubt that Sam McClure was the great inspirer of the new journalism.

Mark Sullivan, who later became one of America's earliest syndicated columnists, recalled his brief staff tenure: "Samuel S. McClure, I thought at the time and still think as I look back, was the pre-eminent magazine genius, easily first, in a period in which magazines flowered as never before . . . With his perpetual immersion in ideas and impulses, and the hectic activities they led him into — activities so numerous, diverse and often mutually destructive that he could not always carry them to fruit — with that went utter lack of interest in money or in the material details of presses, paper and balance sheets."[7] Curtis Brady, McClure's business manager, explained the editorial process more succinctly, "if he had been only half as good a business man as he had been good as an editor he would not have died penniless."[8]

Good as an editor McClure was. He invented muckraking. He put Lincoln Steffens on the trail of municipal corruption. With the aid of Knox alumnus Albert Boyden, Steffens traced corruption through St. Louis, Chicago, Minneapolis and a score of other communities, and McClure entitled the work *The Shame of the Cities*. "We all worked and planned together on these articles," McClure wrote of the series into which he poured about $30,000.[9]

Ida Tarbell's *History of Standard Oil* was McClure's indictment of the monopolies. Miss Tarbell, skilled at the collection of written and oral testimony and a master of careful, clear writing, exhaustively chronicled the growth of John D. Rockefeller's oil business from a small farm into a national monopoly. She later wrote of her objective in these years of careful work, "there is a great difference between a sensational presentation of a public scandal for the sake of making a good story, and a serious study of situations which are making the public uneasy."[10] Her history, she remembered, "was undertaken purely for the purpose of showing how the trust, which at that time was little understood and considerably feared, could come about, under our institutions."[11] The history, McClure calculated, took almost two years to write and cost "$30,000

before a line appeared."[12] Miss Tarbell spent a year with her staff collecting data before the first article appeared. The total cost of some two dozen articles McClure placed at between $60,000 and $70,000. When Ray Stannard Baker prepared a series on Armour and the beef trust, he was given a year to do the research and writing.[13] With these articles McClure created a national sensation and inaugurated a season of reform journalism. His articles contributed directly to President Theodore Roosevelt's attempts to break up the trusts and control the railroads and encouraged efforts across the land at municipal reform. But did he make any money?

Some certainly thought so. An early historian in the field, C. C. Regier, wrote that "the public response to the articles of Miss Tarbell and Steffens was immediate and McClure discovered his circulation mounting rapidly. Although more interested in this than in reform, he became impressed with the exposures . . ."[14] Other historians in the field followed Regier's lead. Harold U. Faulkner, the Charles Beards, and Granville Hicks in their early accounts of muckraking reached the straightforward conclusion that Sam McClure pushed social reform to boost circulation. This was hardly the result in any case.

Despite the brilliant series, *McClure's* circulation remained basically unchanged. As McClure later wrote to C. C. Regier, "the fact is that our circulation and reputation had been made" prior to muckraking.[15] In fact the flow of muckraking articles which stirred a nation was quickly imitated by a half dozen other magazines, to the financial disadvantage of *McClure's*. Thomas Lawson's "Frenzied Finance," an expose of Wall Street inside trading, pushed the circulation of *Everybody's* from 250,000 to 735,000 in the course of a few months. The Hearst-owned *Cosmopolitan* effectively used David Graham Phillip's "Treason of the Senate" as a circulation builder, and Robert Collier's weekly profited by publishing Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. Seemingly everyone profited except Sam McClure. As he wrote, "the financial effect of these expensive series was a reduction in our profits," and the magazine's "most profitable years were before we printed those articles."[16] Sensationalist — and perhaps socialist — pap made money. Hard, professional research and careful writing barely held its own in this market place.

The financial ledgers of *McClure's* bear out much of what the embattled editor had to say with regard to costs of investigative reporting. To re-write an article cost an extra $800 over the course of a month. This cut into profits as much of the material submitted by Steffens and some of the younger writers had to be heavily re-written. To avoid suits, many articles had to be researched by a legal consultant such as Mark Sullivan. Muckraking sent shivers of despair through the business office as some muckraked hosts cancelled advertising. While *McClure's* became a household name, profits tumbled. The magazine made $83,000 in 1898 and $126,000 in 1900. Thereafter the financial roof crumbled. In 1904, a prime muckraking year when each issue was filled with accounts of municipal

despoilation and the doings of Standard Oil, the magazine lost $8,127, and a year later, the company, valued at $733,000, earned a bare $55,000.[17]

Since circulation revenues grew but slowly at McClure's, the costly business of doing investigative reporting had to be borne by advertising revenues. This heavy reliance created an overt threat to the independent editorial judgment of the muckrakers. Until 1905 *McClure's* seemed to be on firm ground in this respect with advertising revenues at $705,000 (up from $549,000 in 1902), or more than any other magazine in the field. The situation reversed itself very quickly in 1906 as *Everybody's* tripled its circulation with Thomas Lawson's series on Wall Street, some of McClure's staff deserted to the *American Magazine*, carrying patrons with them, and the business office faced a series of internal crises. Will Irwin, a brilliant McClure reporter, addressed this problem in a series on the American press published, of all places, in *Collier's* in 1911. He wrote that "when reformers tried to abolish machine rule, the interests allied with political grafters often saw advertisers, who either withdrew their patronage or threatened to do so . . ."[18] McClure wrote that he was fully conscious of this problem. "The editorial policy of the magazine was strongly against our interests in the advertising department," he acknowledged, but truthfully insisted that "I paid no attention to the advertising department, or the expenses, or to circulation."[19] This may not be a laudatory characteristic in a publisher. It is a sublime characteristic of a crusading editor. Curtis Brady, who presided over the worsening business situation and secured the services of Ernest Elmo Calkins and his advertising agency in this respect, remembered that Sam McClure never attended a single advertising meeting in the history of *McClure's*. The man who hawked ads himself for the *Knox Student* and the *Wheelman* left his own fortunes seemingly to fate.

More cautious publishers shaped their editorial policies around revenues. Albert Brisbane, a successful and rich Hearst editor, was reported to sell favorable editorials for $1,000, and lesser journalists routinely turned out commendatory reviews of plays and operas for free tickets and other perquisites.

Editors like McClure who attacked the sale of adulterated proprietary drugs and alcoholic beverages were denied precious advertising dollars by these interests. Before the automobile era patent medicines and liquor companies were the largest advertisers in the nation. Samuel Adams estimated that some 15,000 newspapers carried ads for medical nostrums, and the standard nostrum contract stipulated that all advertising would be cancelled in the event of any regulatory legislation being passed by the state government. McClure was opposed to accepting such material. By 1905 Curtis Brady reported that the magazine rejected each month an average of thirty pages of junk advertising by patient medicines, cigarette companies, and beverage companies.[20] This represented a monthly loss of $15,000 in revenues that went to other less scrupulous magazines and newspapers.

Inevitably muckraking articles offended powerful people. One cannot call John D. Rockefeller a machiavellian prince, Mark Hanna the political boss of the United States, Richard Croker a man devoid of character, J. P. Morgan a heartless financial rogue, or the six greatest American railroad buildings despoilers of independent farmers and shippers without skirting libel laws and hurting feelings. Only the naive could believe this would not affect revenues. The powerful fight back. In response to Miss Tarbell's expose, Standard Oil purchased printing space across the country to defend its good name. A patent medicine concern sued the *Ladies Home Journal*, and collected despite evidence that their concoction contained poison. McClure went to court at least once, but his carefully documented articles prevented embarrassment. As William Allen White jested, if sued, then the magazine could tell the **whole** unpalliated truth about the villians.

In December, 1905, Ray Stannard Baker published an article on railroad rebates, then supposedly illegal, that disturbed the equipoise of the business office. Baker's expertise on railroads was used by President Theodore Roosevelt in framing a portion of the State of the Union address that year. The offending article gave an account of J. Ogden Armour's beef trust in Chicago, clearly identified as one that had profited from railroad favoritism. Baker said unkind but true things about this chicanery and concluded that Armour and his friends were "TRAITORS TO THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY." Unfortunately, the main culprit was a heavy advertiser in *McClure's*, where his double page spread had appeared for over ten years. Armour learned of the series before publication and sent McClure a telegram that the meat packing company must reconsider its advertising budget. Upon reflection the meat packing tycoon could not buy four pages of advertising a month in a journal which Armour felt was "too much of a men's magazine."[21] Curtis Brady rushed to Chicago to debate the matter, and after six months the advertising was restored. Baker's article cost the magazine $24,000 in advertising.

But McClure never shrank from telling the hard truth. When Charles Evans Hughes revealed that unregulated New York life insurance companies were engaged in many spurious financial transactions, McClure ordered Burton J. Hendrick to begin the drum beat of exposure. Hendrick went to the task with a relish. He quickly discovered that Mutual Life Company paid substantial sums, between $5,000 and $11,000 a month, to secure favorable reports in some 100 newspapers. Articles were printed as if they were from an independent new source. The practice was little different from that of the patent medicine companies and Standard Oil. Both Equitable and Mutual, following *McClure's* exposure of this and other sordid practices, naturally cancelled their advertising.

An attack by Steffens on the Royal Baking Powder Company also set the advertising department on edge. Steffens charged the proprietor with bribing Missouri politicians and debasing his product with alum. Life expectancy in the United States went up considerably after this modest

exposure, but a storm, which soon passed, was created in the business office over advertising.

In November, 1906, with a circulation only half that of *Everybody's*, *McClure's* carried over 211 pages of net paid advertising, more than any other magazine in the country. Thereafter McClure's position steadily declined. Between the panic of 1907 and 1909, while publishing costs increased, *McClure's* lost 20 per cent of its advertising. Junk ads finally appeared in the once illustrious journal. Some editors charged that a newsprint monopoly, protected by the Aldrich tariff, recklessly raised prices in 1910.[22] The relentless increase in the cost of newsprint was but one of the pressures upon the muckraking journals. As always the marketplace demanded lower costs and greater circulation to justify heftier advertising rates. Sam McClure chose the honorable path: brilliant, well-researched articles, splendid drawings and pictures, the finest fiction, and hang the adverisers. The iron law of publishing was working in other publishing houses as well. *Collier's,* indebted, was sold to the Crowell Publishing Company. *Cosmopolitan* was absorbed by the Hearst publishing empire. Two small muckraking journals which had ridden the crest, *Success* and *Hampton's,* either went under or changed their editorial policies in 1911.

Unable to pay the mortgage on a Long Island publishing plant, McClure became heavily indebted to the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company with an onerous rate of interest, 16 percent. A re-organization in 1911 ousted him from the editorship of his magazine and left him with worthless common stock. While the Goliath of the published world succumbed, the Davids, like *Field and Stream* and *Woman's World,* went successfully on for a generation.

Those contemporary critics who lampooned McClure as a showman, a publishing P. T. Barnum, a huckster pushing social reform to gain circulation were obviously wrong. The magazine did not run that way. Many like Harold U. Faulkner, who argued that the muckraker was "in most cases destructive rather than constructive in his criticisms," have blamed a tired public and a conspiratorial capitalism for the decline of reform journalism.[23] In Faulkner's words, "to a lesser degree this decline was due to a persistent attack upon the magazines by the business interests which forced them to soften their attacks or drove them into bankruptcy."[24] A prime historical source for some writers was Upton Sinclair's *The Brass Check,* a fictional and specialist study of Robert Collier's enmeshment with a New York banker. The economic issues were obviously much more complicated than this simplistic view and had something to do with a product and its market at a time of increased competition. Louis Filler concludes that the muckraking magazines failed because most turned to popular themes while some "died of buccaneering and dubious practices."[25]

The place of the *McClure's* muckrakers within the American tradition is still in dispute. Some like Louis Filler generally praise them and think that

the likes of Drew Pearson, Jack Anderson, I. F. Stone, and Daniel Ellsberg are their spiritual descendants. Others are more critical. Walter Lippman, sometimes identified with the new journalism himself, classified muckrakers like McClure as men who saw criminal intent in many activities that were more or less ordinary. Twenty times he heard that Wall Street financiers intended to suppress the progressive periodicals. On one occasion, Lippman wrote in *Drift and Mastery,* he and Lincoln Steffens, while walking down a railroad track, decided that the muckrakers would have indicted the railroads for conspiring to place the cross-ties too close together for easy walking. If Lippman sought to kill the muckraking tradition by trivializing it, more recent commentators have taken a different tack.

Thomas Leonard, a journalism professor at Berkeley, writes that muckraking "helped to kill the love of politics in the United States," that "muckrakers popularized new terms to disparage politics," and that "reform literature often implied that citizens who did not keep a cornfield or a one-room school in sight could not be trusted to govern."[26] Such charges must be confronted with the evidence. It is evident that McClure and his Knox compatriots produced such superb literature and accurate history that they helped move a nation towards control of the trusts, racial justice, feminine equality, support for pure food and drugs, and other needed reforms. They were truly prophets crying in the land. George Washington Gale would have understood.

Improverished, Sam McClure reached his 93rd birthday in February, 1949. A month later the originator of muckraking died in the St. Barnabas Hospital in New York City. After a simple funeral in the hospital chapel his body was returned to Galesburg for burial beside his wife. It was an unfitting end for one whom Curtis Brady called "the greatest editor who ever lived."

NOTES

[1]Harold Wilson, *McClure's Magazine and the Muckrakers* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 12..

[2]S. S. McClure to C. C. Regier, March 26, 1933, S. S. McClure ms., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind.

[3]Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), p. 323.

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[5]Peter Lyon, *Success Story* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 133.

[6]Financial Sheet, March, 1906, Tarbell ms., Allegheny College; Lyon, p. 251.

[7]Mark Sullivan, *The Education of an American* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1938), pp. 193-97.

[8]Curtis Brady, "The High Cost of Impatience," (Unpublished ms., n. d.) p. 288.

[9]S. S. McClure to C. C. Regier, March 26, 1933, SSMcC ms.

[10]Ida Tarbell to C. C. Regier, May 24, 1922, Tarbell ms.

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[12]S. S. McClure to C. C. Regier, March 26, 1933, SSMcC ms.

[13]Lyon, p. 236.

[14]S. S. McClure to Regier, March 26, 1933, SSMcC ms.

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[18]Will Irwin, *The Making of a Reporter* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1942), pp. 164-69, cited in Will Irwin, *The American Newspaper*, Clifford F. Weigle and David G. Clark, eds. (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1969), p. xii.

[19]S. S. McClure to Regier, March 26, 1933, SSMcC. ms.

[20]Brady, "The High Cost of Impatience," p. 141.

[21]Brady, "The High Cost of Impatience," p. 187.

[22]*New York Times*, Jan. 8, 1910, 1:3; July 10, 1910, pt. 3, 2:4.

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[24]Ibid.

[25]Louis Filler, *Appointment at Armageddon: Muckraking and Progressivism in the American Tradition* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976), p. 385.

[26]*New York Times*, April 19, 1986, p. 28.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF KNOX COUNTY

Gordana Rezab

This is the eighth bibliography in a series started in 1981 and appearing in spring issues of *Western Illinois Regional Studies.* Thus far bibliographies of the following west-central Illinois counties have been published: Fulton, Mercer, Henderson, Calhoun, Pike, Adams, Warren, Schuyler, Brown and McDonough. Entries in these bibliographies consist of separately published monographs, pamphlets, typescripts duplicated for limited private distribution, and maps. The bibliographies do not include periodical or newspaper articles, scrapbooks, manuscripts, or genealogical studies on single families. Biographies of individuals are included only if they contain a significant amount of information on the county. Entries are arranged by major categories.

Several libraries have sizeable collections of materials on Knox County. The most comprehensive collection is housed in the Galesburg Public Library. This collection consists of printed materials, scrapbooks, maps and atlases, photographs, and an extensive vertical file. Knox College Library also has a substantial collection on Knox County, and the best collection on Knox College. Other libraries with a wealth of materials on the county are the Illinois Historical Survey at the University of Illinois, the State Historical Library in Springfield, and Western Illinois University Library.

The form of entry in this bibliography closely follows the standard guides for cataloging in the National Union Catalog and in the on-line bibliographic data bases. However, since local publications often do not contain all the bibliographic elements, the form of entry may not always appear consistent.

Local publications are generally issued in small editions and distributed in small geographical areas. This frequently results in few surviving copies. If such a publication has been overlooked and has not been included in this listing, the compiler would greatly appreciate a note to that effect. Please address all correspondence to Gordana Rezab, *Western Illinois Regional Studies,* Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL 61455.

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

VIGILANTES ON THE MIDDLE BORDER: A STUDY OF SELF-APPOINTED LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE STATES OF THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI FROM 1840 TO 1880. By Patrick B. Nolan. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987. Pp. 256. $30.00.

This volume is a facsimile reprint of Patrick Nolan's 1971 Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Minnesota. Nolan was a student of Philip D. Jordan so this work supplements Jordan's *Frontier Law and Order* (1970). Nolan's work was published as one volume in Garland's Series of Outstanding Dissertations on American Legal and Constitutional History. In some ways it is a classic historical work on American vigilantism. Nolan's study and Richard Maxwell Brown's *Strain of Violence* (1975) are the major historical perspectives on vigilantism.

Nolan described vigilantism through case studies of the Waseca County (Minnesota) Horse Thief Detective Society, the Henderson County (Illinois) Union Vigilance Committee, the Anti-Horse Thief Association of Clark County, Missouri, the LaCrosse (Wisconsin) Committee of Vigilance, and the Prairie du Chien (Wisconsin) Vigilantes. Nolan believed that legalized vigilance committees often existed for many years and became almost institutionalized in their policing functions. Nolan wrote that "Some vigilante groups were organized for a short time, to deal with specific problems of lawlessness and community disorder. They disbanded after a brief period. Other vigilance committees sought the authorization of law, saw themselves as a parallel structure to the existing machinery of law enforcement and hoped to become a permanent volunteer police force in the community" (pp. 235-36). Nolan studied the five vigilance committees from both a statute law perspective and a collective behavior perspective.

The Anti-Horse Thief Association of Clark County, Missouri was one of the longest lived vigilance committees Nolan studied. It was formed in Clark County in 1854 and ultimately grew into a fraternal order with sub-orders in Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. The association ultimately disappeared in the 1930s. Nolan claimed the Anti-Horse Thief Association was indirectly responsible for a mob lynching that occurred in Clark County in 1879. He used this example to show that anti-horse thief associations were really vigilance committees.

The Henderson County (Illinois) Union Vigilance Committee existed from about 1860 to 1880, according to Nolan. He said that no membership lists, constitution, or by-laws existed to document the exact founding of the committee. Nolan was not aware that the constitution of the Henderson Protection Company had appeared in the *Oquawka Spectator* on September 18, 1850. Another constitution for the Henderson County Mutual

Protection Society had been published in the *Oquawka Spectator* on March 24, 1864. While these two groups are not called vigilantes they do seem to be predecessors to the Henderson County Union Vigilance Committee that Nolan studied.

Patrick Nolan has created a work that portrays vigilantism as having different degrees of severity. The popular image of the raw frontier lynch law vigilance committee does not ring true after one has read Nolan's study. Nolan's book is an excellent example of how local history can be used to illuminate larger societal concerns and problems.

John Lee Allaman
Raritan, Illinois

CARL SANDBURG: HIS LIFE AND WORKS. By North Callahan. University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1987. Pp. 258. $29.75.

In this biography of the Galesburg poet, North Callahan makes much of Sandburg's lifelong interest in Lincoln that culminated in the massive six-volume history so widely read and so controversial among readers two generations ago. If Lincoln was Sandburg's dream, we might say that Sandburg is Callahan's dream; for his admiration has prompted Mr. Callahan, an emeritus professor of history, to rewrite and significantly expand his 1970 book, *Carl Sandburg: Lincoln of Our Literature*. We should note right away that this is not the same book, although the form and emphasis are not very different. This time the author has drawn extensively upon scholarship and critical sources made available since the poet's death. Many of his references are to papers delivered by historians and literary critics at the "Carl Sandburg Centenary" at Knox College in 1978. Also new interviews with people who knew Sandburg and the use of more recent books like Helga Sandburg's *A Great and Glorious Romance* (the daughter's 1978 reminiscences of her parents) make this product a far more substantial, scholarly work than the 1970 book. Callahan has also made use of earlier sources, such as Richard Crowder's Carl Sandburg (1964), a solid study ignored in the first biography. Finally, two collections in the University of Illinois Rare Book Room seem to have been of value: the Carl Sandburg Collection of letters and other documents and the William A. Sutton Collection, materials mostly relating to Sandburg's lecture schedule.

Professor Callahan is best at giving the reader a sense of Sandburg's colorful career and vibrant personality, especially the reader who has little knowledge of the familiar facts of the Galesburg boyhood, the wanderlust time, the remove to the fermenting intellectual vat that was Chicago in 1912 and that produced almost at once *Chicago Poems*, followed by the many years of proliferating fame when Sandburg became as much a public figure as a poet. Writing of that crucial early move to Chicago,

Callahan identifies Sandburg's decision with some prevailing mood or force in American life: "The winds of change were blowing for Carl Sandburg. They came out of the prairies and sang in his mind and heart and would not let him rest. He had to know that he would have to respond to these forces so surging in his life and destiny."

If such passages remind us of Lincoln's own half-legendary emergence from the prairies, they are one with Callahan's earlier impression of the poet as the Lincoln of our literature. Both were men of the people, advocates of the common man. And often the comparisons are perceptive: ". . . Lincoln, like Sandburg, yearned for distinction. They both courted the public favor. And both had an ambition possessed by few notable figures in all our history . . . ." One quality that Sandburg had in common with the President Professor Callahan seems to neglect: a kind of sadness, a melancholy, skepticism or indecisiveness about the purposes of life that found voice in a lyrical pessimism in the poetry. Present even in poems on Lincoln himself like "Cool Tombs," the quality I am describing is suggested best in Sandburg's life by his constant restlessness.

In his central chapters on the Lincoln books, Callahan is even handed, making clear both weaknesses and strengths. Sandburg's errors of fact and his creative suggestiveness are an old story now, thanks to many of the very critics quoted by Callahan; but the latter balances their testimony with that of other commentators who stress the poetic, imaginative power of the Lincoln protrait that distinguish it as a work of literature rather than straight history. As we might expect, the professor of history is weakest in his treatment of the poetry. He prudently relies heavily on critical voices; but unfortunately the attempt to survey all of the poetry in a single chapter dictated the use of broad and rather superficial assessments, preventing penetrating insights to Sandburg's methods and themes. Because the book is about the poet's work as well as his life, we would like more literary intelligence. It is almost certain to be as a poet that he will be judged by future generations.

For most serious students of literature, Crowder's *Carl Sandburg* will remain the standard work because of its strong, steady focus on the poetry. For the general reader, however, who wants an interesting story, or the scholar seeking specific background on the life, Professor Callahan's book will be valuable, the best thing of its kind on Sandburg, despite the author's tendency to see his subject as Lincoln's literary doppelgänger. What is still needed, especially if the Illinois poet's sliding literary reputation is to be rescued, is a work as thorough as Callahan's on the life and as perceptive as Crowder's on the poems — that probes as neither of these do into the poet's creative origins and powers and directs an original light onto the poems, chiefly, as Louis Rubin suggested some time ago, the best of the short lyrics.

Charles Mayer
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THE POET AND THE DREAM GIRL: THE LOVE LETTERS OF LILIAN STEICHEN AND CARL SANDBURG. Edited by Margaret Sandburg. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987. $22.95.

The year 1908 was a relatively minor period in Carl Sandburg's career, but not in his life. His break from his Galesburg home and family complete, he had temporarily abandoned writing and was working as a Socialist organizer north of Milwaukee. In January he met Lilian Steichen, and between January and June, he wooed and married her. She encouraged his poetry from the outset, and was to influence him profoundly, as soul-mate and as partner. Between their first meeting and their wedding they were together only twice; their courtship was carried on almost exclusively by mail, and it is therefore hard to imagine one better documented than theirs. It is the record of that courtship, 95 letters by Lilian Steitchen and 39 by Carl Sandburg, that comprises the major portion of this volume, ably and lovingly edited by the Sandburgs' eldest daughter.

Lilian Steichen was 25 in 1908, five years younger than her suitor. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Chicago, she had already taught in North Dakota and was teaching at Princeton, Illinois, High School. That academic background, plus the fact that her brother was the already-recognized photographer Edward Steichen, only suggest the extraordinary family influence toward achievement that must have been hers. Like Sandburg she was of Nordic immigrant origin, Luxembourger in her case. She was definitely Sandburg's intellectual match, and their common interest in Socialism and many mutual acquaintances gave them initially much to write to one another about. Sandburg initiated the correspondence after the first meeting, outside Victor Berger's office in Milwaukee, but we know less of what attracted him to his future mate. In Lilian's case, we can certainly infer that the attraction came from Sandburg's letters and poems to her. Each writer became deeply impressed by qualities of personality and mind in the other, and said so.

Because more of Lilian's letters have survived than Carl's, more of her is revealed in this collection, and we are the richer for that, for everything disclosed about her heretofore in print has been second-hand. Until she read some of his poetry (some of which he sent her is also included in this volume), she professed greater interest in Sandburg as a hard-working organizer than as a poet; indeed she dismissed poetry as a capitalist indulgence. But by her third letter to Sandburg, Steichen appears to have been swept off her feet by her "dear poet-of-our-world-today," and she urged him to be "both organizer and poet." By her fourth letter she was divulging confidences. Her salutations became increasingly personal (from "Dear Mr. Sandburg," to "Dear Comrade," to "My Dear Comrade"), and by her seventh letter, two weeks after the exchange really began in February, she entreated Sandburg to visit her at the family farm in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, giving detailed instructions on how to reach it. The two correspondents did indeed meet there for a week in early April;

thereafter their correspondence became one between lovers, with Lilian writing on every pretext, twice for instance, to rectify 15-minute mistakes in train time, and sometimes three times a day, till they were married on June 15. Throughout, her praise for his poetry was unstinting.

Lilian's letters are the more ideological of the two; her Socialism was a deeply-imbibed and intellectually well-considered affair. Though sometimes surprisingly self-effacing, she was sturdily a feminist, and she had a future vision of herself and Carl serving the cause together, as comrades-in-arms, speaking, writing, and raising funds. In marriage she sought intimacy of course, but she took sexual liberation for granted, as did Sandburg. Significantly, however, it was Sandburg, not Steichen, who wrote in the letters of the possibility of children being born to their union.

These affecting personal documents also possess a universality. They are a reflection of the golden years before the wars when Socialism was not seditious, and when the Enlightenment still survived, incarnate as Progressivism. Optimism for themselves and their world animated Sandburg and Steichen (the S-S as they called themselves). Within this collection are clear statements on the Woman Question of the early 20th Century, and on marriage, and also descriptions of the drudgery involved in third-party political organization. The seriousness of these subjects is more than balanced, however, by gayety and high spirits expressed by both writers in other letters, and by moving statements of their deepening affection for one another.

The collection connects appropriately with the Sandburg autobiographical canon, already extant in *Always the Young Strangers* and *Ever the Winds of Chance*. The latter ends abruptly with Carl Sandburg taking on the role of organizer in 1907, and with no mention in it of Lilian Steichen. In this volume Sandburg acquires a companion, and his life will never be the same. By all accounts, that life, and Sandburg's poetry, acquired new direction and focus after he met and married Steichen; their marriage was a lifetime full partnership. With Lilian's testimony as now given in this volume, it begins to appear why this was so.

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WHITE TOWN DROWSING. By Ron Powers. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986. Pp. 313. $17.95.

In *Life on the Mississippi* Mark Twain referred to Hannibal, Missouri as a "white town drowsing" in the summer sunshine. His comment reflected the inactivity and, perhaps, lack of initiative in his famous boyhood community. But Ron Powers uses the phrase ironically, for his book is no conventional memoir of a sleepy river town. It is an account of Hannibal's abortive attempt to capitalize on its famous past, as well as a statement of the author's ambivalent relationship to the town.

Powers was born in Hannibal and grew up there, until his family moved in 1959, when he was seventeen. He later became a New York newspaperman, but he always believed that he might one day return to Hannibal — a common kind of American yearning despite Thomas Wolfe's famous dictum that "you can't go home again." Powers did return, but not as a permanent resident. He came back periodically in the summer of 1985 to chronicle the town's management of a massive Mark Twain Sesquicentennial, as well as to dig into the town's history.

Early in the book, Powers provides some vivid personal impressions of the Hannibal he knew during the 1950s. As he says, "I grew up in a town that seemed less a town to me than a kingdom. Its hills turned neighborhoods into discrete principalities and lent its modest area a bogus sense of vasteness — the South Side, with its peeling bungalows and steeply angled vegetable gardens and tire swings depending from frontyard sycamores, was as culturally separate from stolid, plumb-level St. Mary's Avenue as Portugal from Spain" (p. 12). The town had already begun to exploit its Twain heritage, but not to the extent of more recent years. Like all small towns, it was the center of the universe for youngsters who lived there, and Powers recalls it with obvious affection.

Part of his re-entry into Hannibal was a matter of research, of learning the history of the town from books at the local library. As he discovered, the community once dreamed of growth and prosperity but lost its momentum by the end of the nineteenth century and never regained it. In many ways, the twentieth century seemed to move along without it. Hence, it is not surprising that town leaders of more recent years felt that "what Hannibal needed was a miracle" (p. 69) to revitalize it.

They attempted to provide one through a grandiose Mark Twain Sesquicentennial, "a leviathan celebration that would sprawl over seven months, from May through November of 1985, fueled by a budget of $5,075,000" (p. 99). Powers recounts the development of that project, and the clash of local leaders that accompanied it, right down to its failure to achieve the goals that were set for it. The town became mired in debt. Hannibal had become Twain's Hadleyburg. The book closes with the community torn asunder by political strife that was partly a product of the big scheme. And Powers finds himself on the Mississippi River bridge, neither able to completely identify with his boyhood town nor able to pull completely away from it.

White Town Drowsing has an importance that extends beyond the world of Hannibal and those who have an interest in Hannibal, for the impulse to exploit a community's heritage for commercial gain is widespread. And those who are involved in promoting that exploitation, euphemistically called "tourism," seldom question the rightness of it. They need to, and this well written book could provoke the much-needed thoughtful consideration.

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